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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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Piano no Mori ch 216

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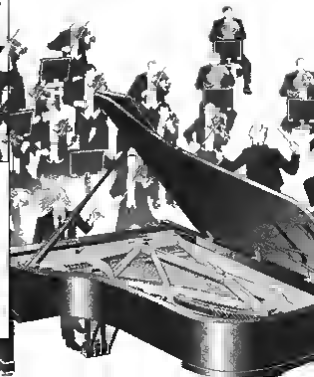
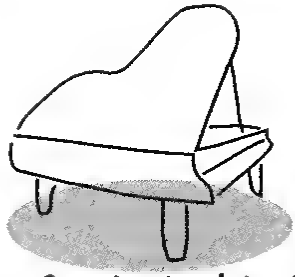
The Perfect World of KAI

24





The Perfect World of KAI

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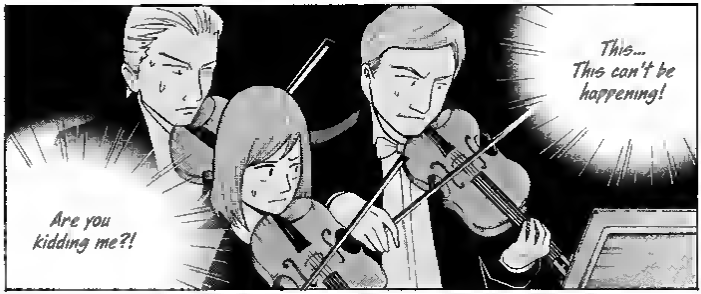
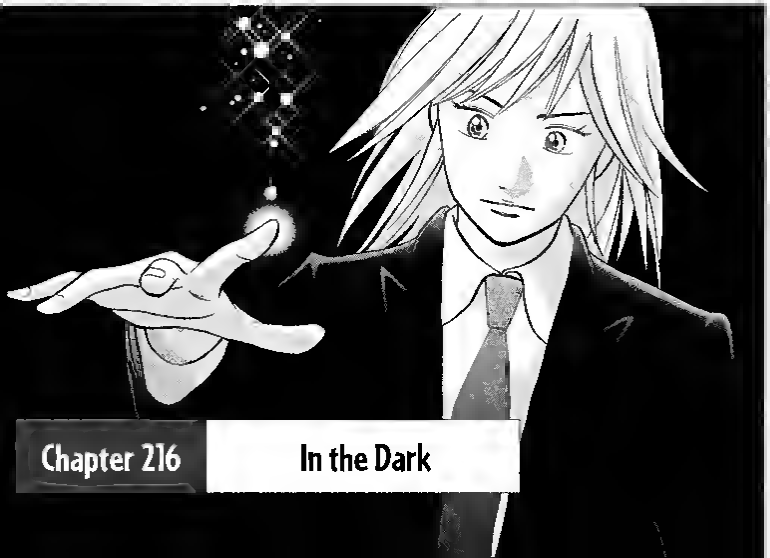
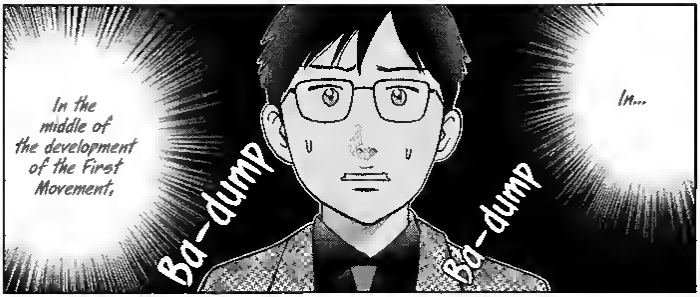
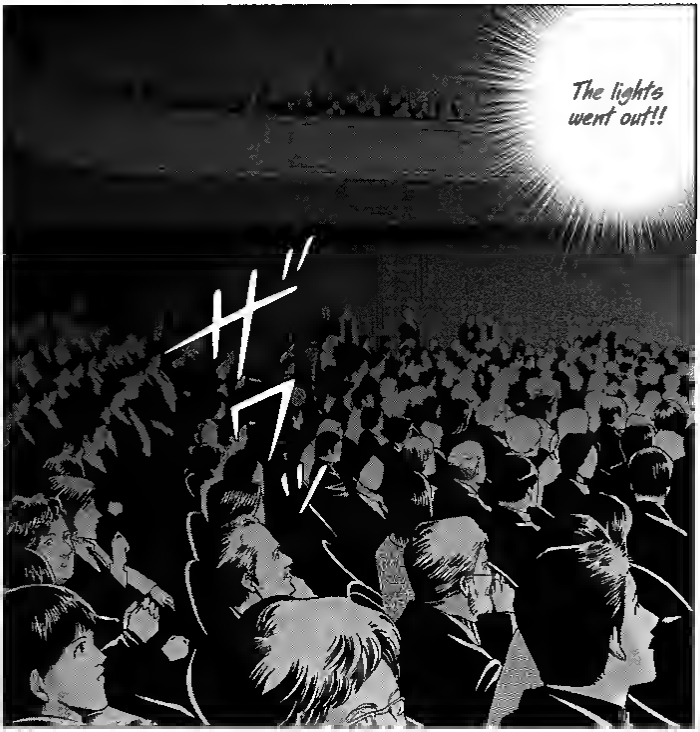




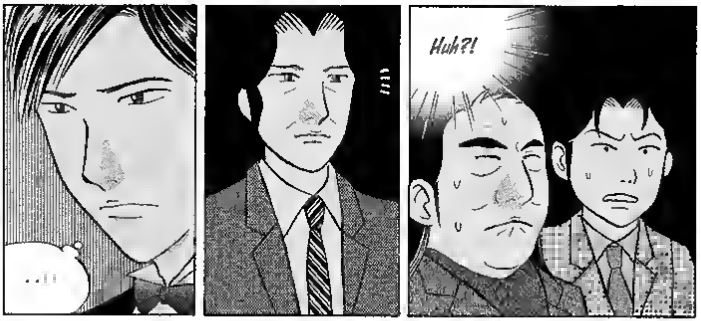
Chapter 216 In the Dark

Has happened!!
The impossible...


In the middle of the development of the First Movement,
Ba-dump
Ba-dump
In...


The lights went out!!

Huh?!
Huh?!
Huh?!

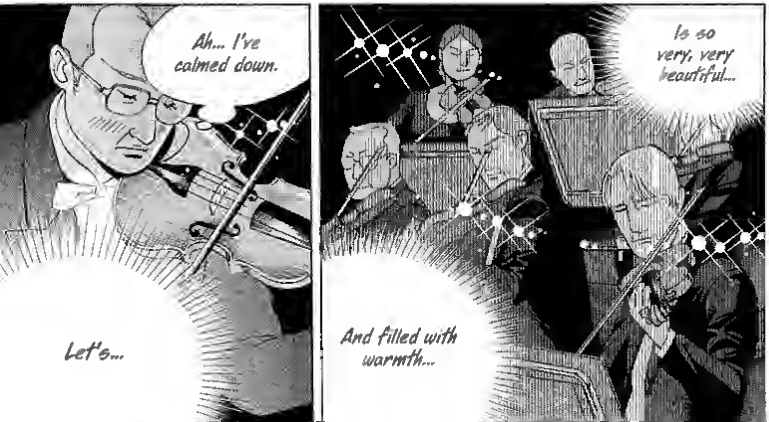

...!!
Huh?!

What...
What an unfortunate accident!!

Everyone... Calm down!
It's all right! Concentrate!!
But I can't see the conductor...
No... I think I can still see him if I look carefully. .
The only thing that can save us...
There's no need to worry... Because the music is infecting our body!
Our eyes will get used to the dark soon... And the lights will come back on right away.

Though I can't see his face...
Is the impeccable piano!
His notes haven't wavered in the slightest, even after the lights went out.

This First Movement played in a Major key...
Speaking of which...


Ah... I've calmed down.
Let's...
Is so very, very beautiful...
And filled with warmth...

Let's follow the piano's lead!
The piano will show us the way!

Give the best performance you can, like you always do!

Is it because of the piano?
The piano didn't slip up due to the accident. That's simply...
The panicking orchestra...
Has calmed down.
Of course he wouldn't mess up.
Ichinose's playing...
Has also soothed the audience's unease in an instant.
Not only has he managed to calm the orchestra,
His playing won't be affected by something so trivial.

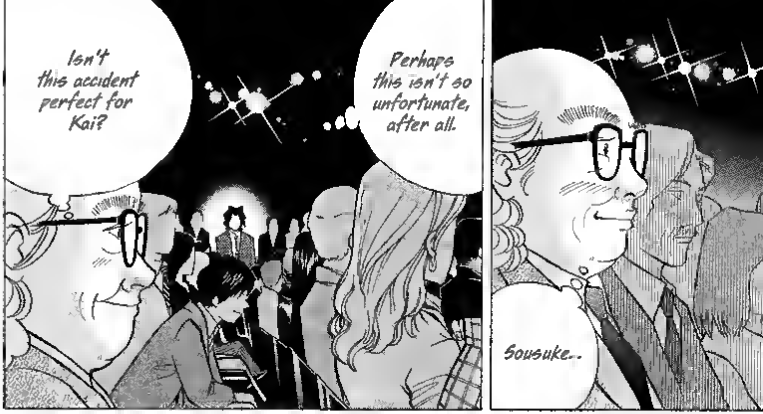
In the dark...
The passages Ichinose is playing...
Are piercing into my heart.. strongly... relentlessly...
The sparkling accents...
Directing the audience's attention to the "sound"... Immersing them into the world of the piece!!
He has turned this sudden darkness...

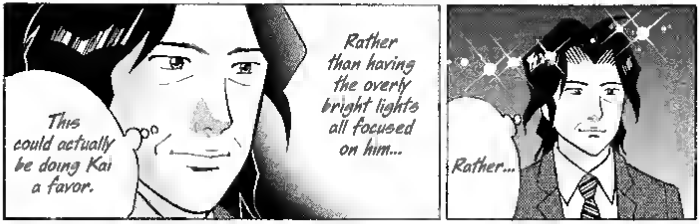
Into the
biggest show!!

How...
How come his playing is resonating so strongly within me?
How has his music...
Suffused so guilelessly into people's heart?!
What's with this sense of harmony?
This sense of liberation...??
How is this child's piano playing capable of putting people in such a good mood?
Just how?

As if my soul has been plucked from my body...
I no longer know where I am.
Is it because of the dark?
I am gradually being drawn into the world of his music...
What...
Is this place?!
What... is this place?!
No... This is somewhere airier...
Is this...
The Philharmonic Hall?

Ah...
That's right.
We are...
Beneath the
starry sky!!

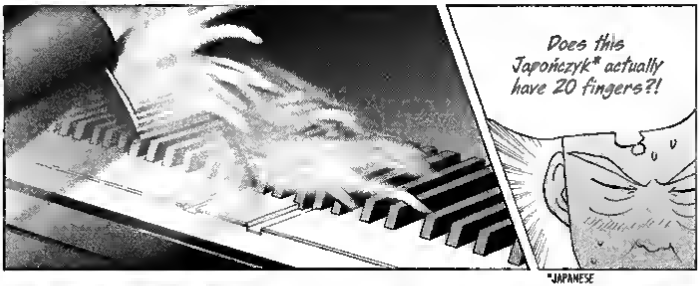

Isn't this accident perfect for Kai?
Perhaps this isn't so unfortunate, after all.
Sousuke..


This could actually be doing Kai a favor.
Rather than having the overly bright lights all focused on him...
Rather...

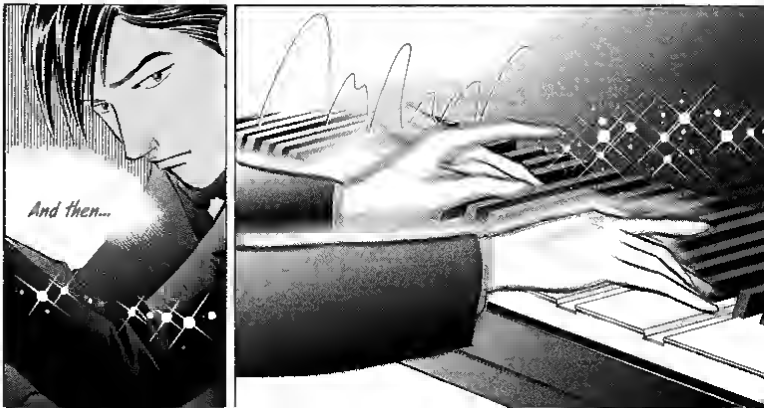
Nights in the forest were no different than days, except bathed in moonlight...
To Kai, who used to play the piano in the forest at all hours, darkness is not unusual.

Then... How will you play the repetition of the second theme?
Wow...
What a beautiful repetition of the first theme.
Huh?!
This is... a pianissimo overflowing with joy!!
There's also an amazing pianissimo in Sonata No. 3 Movement 3, but this is different.
Pianissimo?
Hmm?
It's so delicate, it's as if he's playing another instrument altogether...

*A PASSAGE WHICH BRINGS A MOVEMENT OR PIECE TO A CONCLUSION



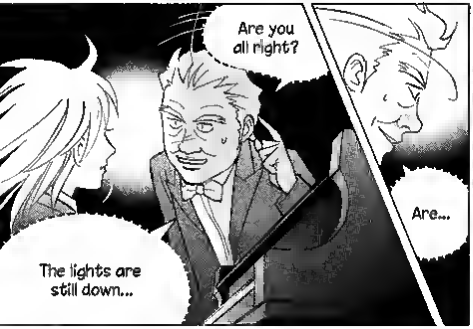
*JAPANESE



A bolt of lightning flashed across my vision...

...And marked the end of the First Movement.

Where...
Where are we now?


Are you all right?
Are...
The lights are still down...

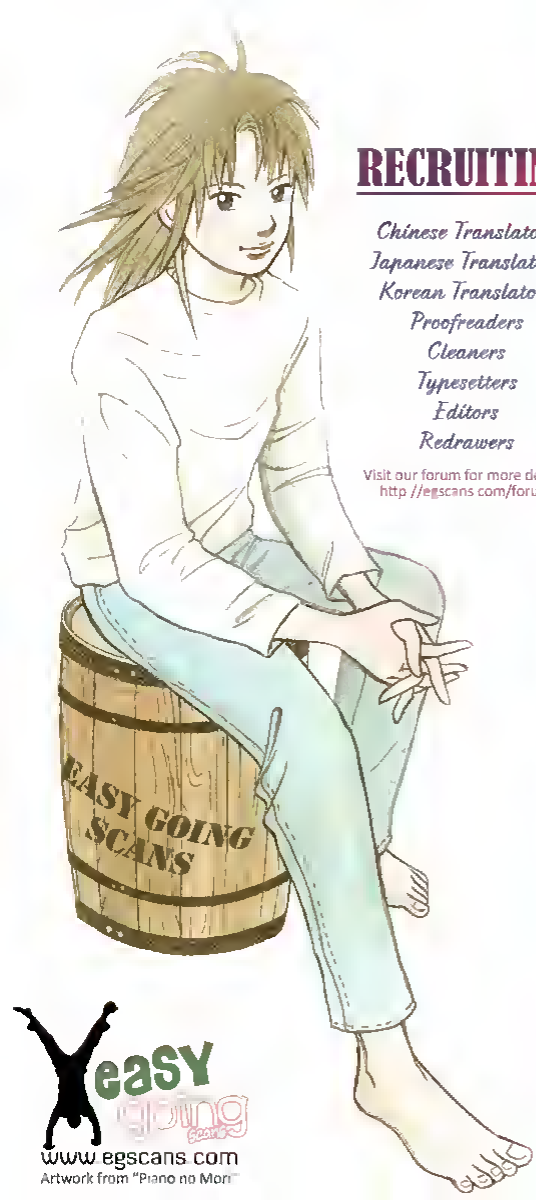
We just went from the Philharmonic Hall to somewhere outdoors, didn't we?
You probably just imagined it!

Well then... Kai Ichinose!
Where are you taking us next?

Haha... I didn't even have to ask, did I?

No. That doesn't matter at all.
We'll follow you wherever you go!
But no matter where you go...
It's a little scary...
We'll accompany you!!

In the darkness, illuminated only by dim lights from the emergency exits...
Ichinose's Second Movement begins.



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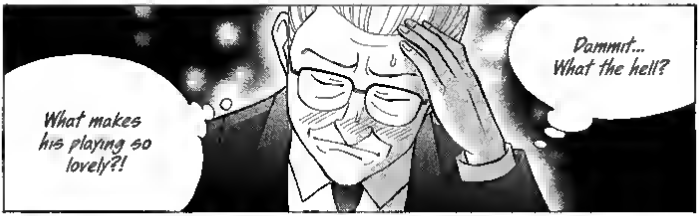
Chapter 217 The Purpose of My Life

Ahh... This Second Movement is...
So incredibly noble and natural...

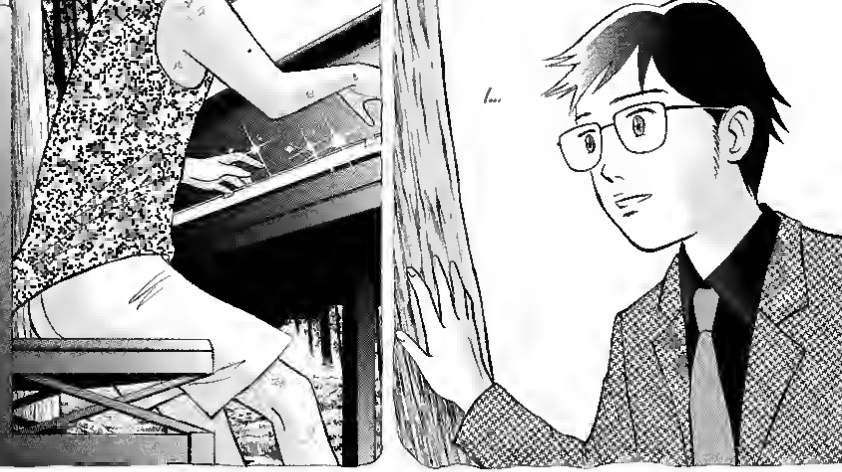

Dammit... What the hell?
What makes his playing so lovely?!

Hmm?
Is that a breeze?

I just let down my guard a little...
Now both my body and spirit have been thoroughly cleansed...

No, this is...
The smell of trees.
The breeze...
Has brought along a grassy scent.
A breeze...?
The forest, right?
Kai, this is...
"Forest of the Piano"!
This is the nostalgic...

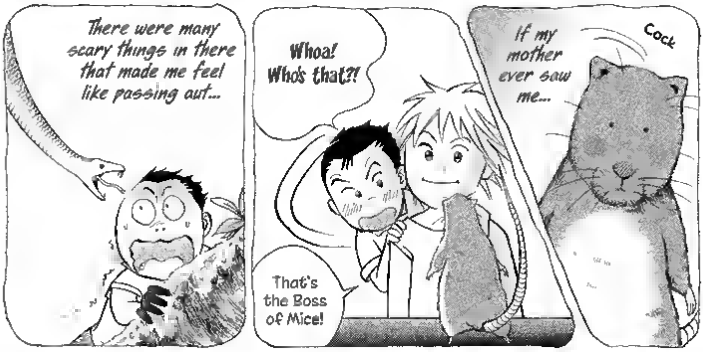
Kai's playing seems to be drawing my consciousness away from my body...
And transporting it... into the forest...

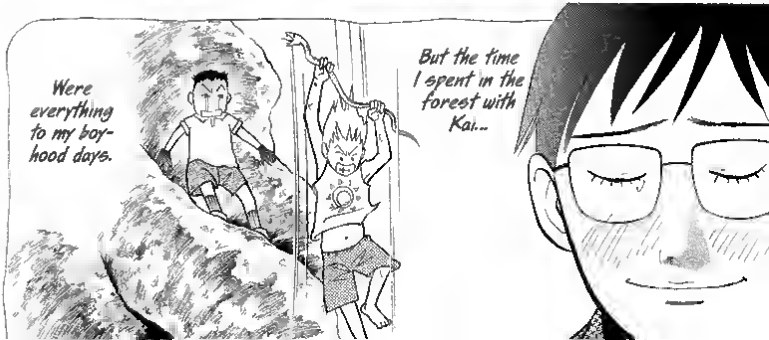

I...

Kai!
I have, in my childhood...

Amamiya
Dashed through this forest countless times.
I've become friends with it!!

Those were magical times... Almost like dreams.


There were many scary things in there that made me feel like passing out...
Whoa! Who's that?!
That's the Boss of Mice!
If my mother ever saw me...
Cock.


Were everything to my boy-hood days.
But the time I spent in the forest with Kai...

I finally understand the power of Ichinose's music.
Is it due to the lack of visual input?
My ears feel sharper.
Because of the tranquillity of the piece!
It has become all the more apparent...
This timbre that purifies the soul...?!
Something's dwelling deep within these notes. What is it?!
What's with this timbre?

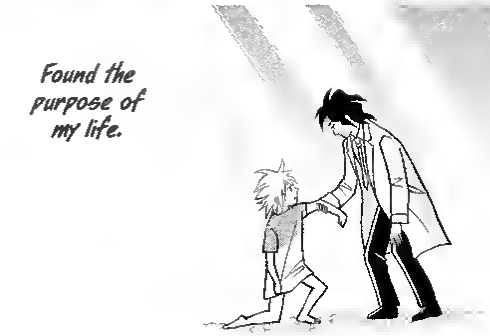
A...Ajino-kun!
What is the secret behind this music?!
What sorcery have you been teaching Ichinose?!
This is... music that only you can play...
Kai...

Music that belongs to you alone.
Music graced by the forest...
That I have taught him... more than what he could give back to me.
Kai might think...
But after my first encounter...
RUSTLE
Bathed in moonlight,
With Kai, playing the piano in the forest...

I thought...
No...

Who can turn him into the real deal!

I was certain that I'm the only one...


Found the purpose of my life.
Ever since this idea came to me, I have...

Kai...
We have been through all sorts of things, haven't we?
Up till then,
I had been living like I was more dead than alive...
So the awakening of my emotions...
Was rather disorienting at first.

Frustration and exasperation towards my own helplessness...
Anger and sadness towards your living condition...
Joy.
But most bemusing of all...
Was what was left when I looked past all that.
Little by little...
Of seeing you grow up...
The joy...
The joy of watching your growth...

Had become something irreplaceable before I knew.
Not common time?
The waves are three-four time today.
Perhaps...
SPLASH
SPLAAASH

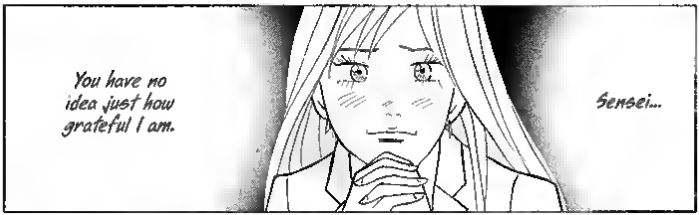
A parent would feel...
This is how...
Perhaps...
It's a quarter note plus a dotted half note, right?
Ah... Then...
As they dote on their child?
Are you listening properly?
Reiko-san.

Kai really is a brilliant pianist.

That can be played by Kai...
This is beautiful music...

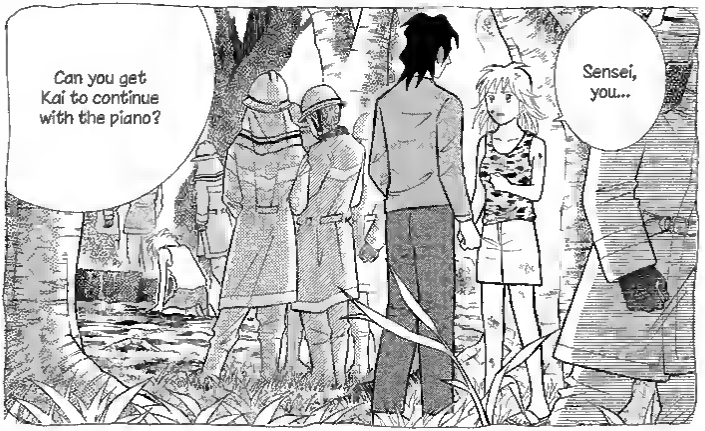
And Kai alone.

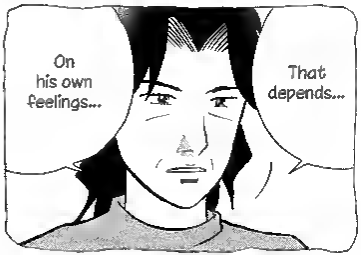
I'm listening.
Sensei,


You have no idea just how grateful I am.
Sensei...

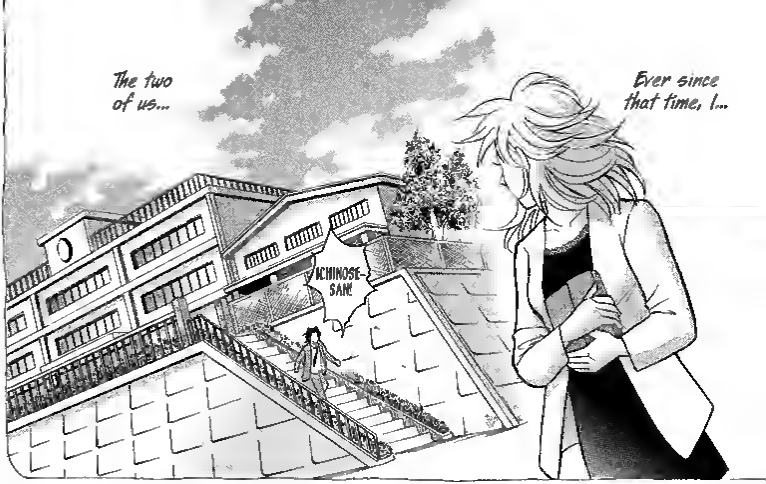
Ever since then, I...
Sensei...

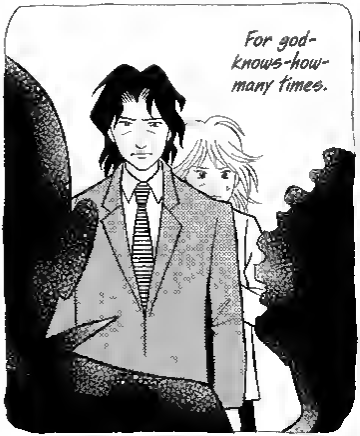
Help Kai...
Please...


Can you get Kai to continue with the piano?
Sensei, you...

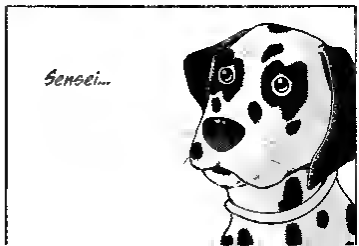

On his own feelings...
That depends...

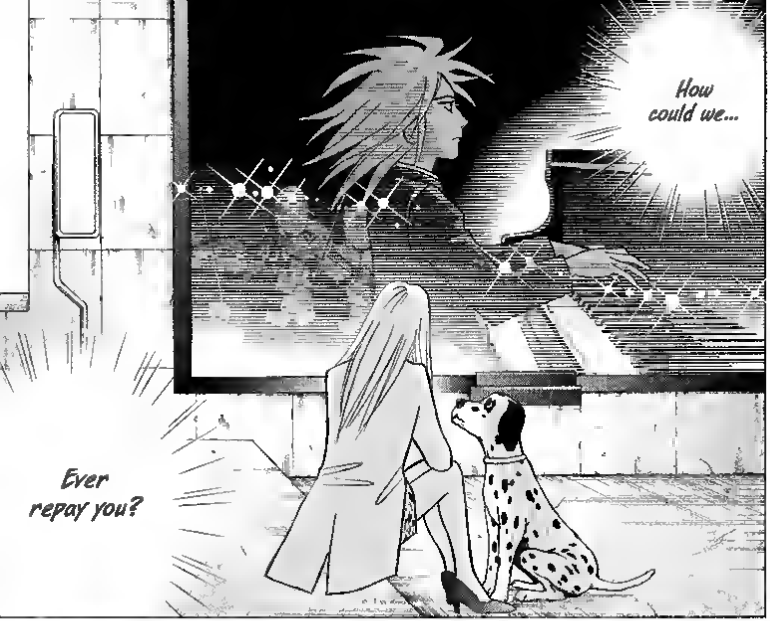
If he's with you, Kai will be able to play the piano, right?

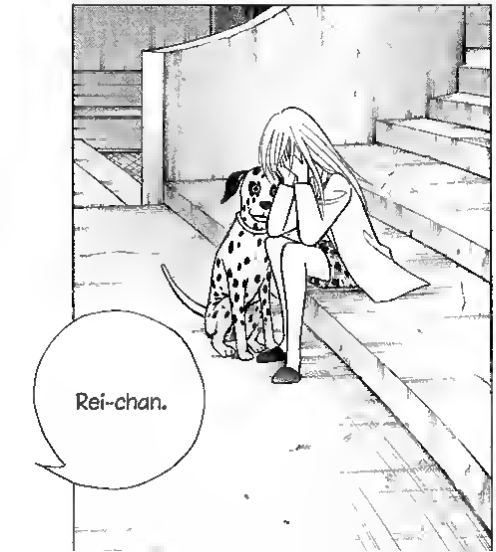

The two of us...
Ever since that time, I...
ICHINOSE-SAN!

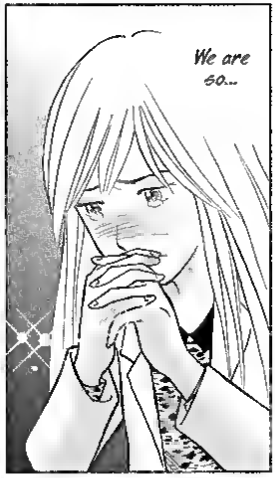

For god-knows-how-many times.

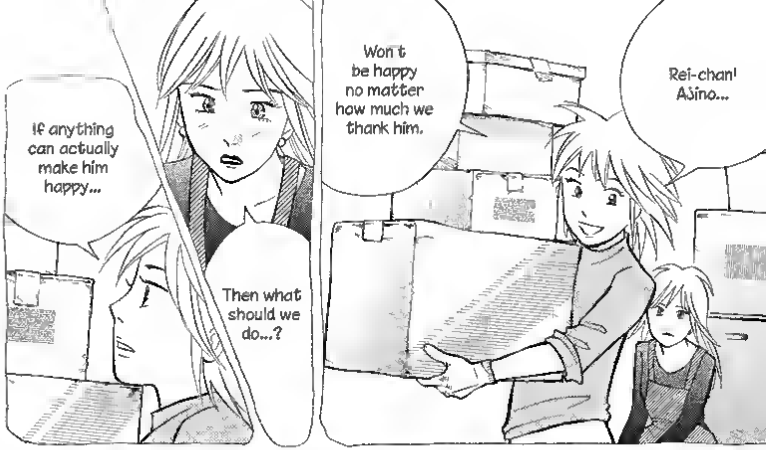
have depended so heavily on you...
And you've stood up for us...


Sensei...


How could we...
Ever repay you?

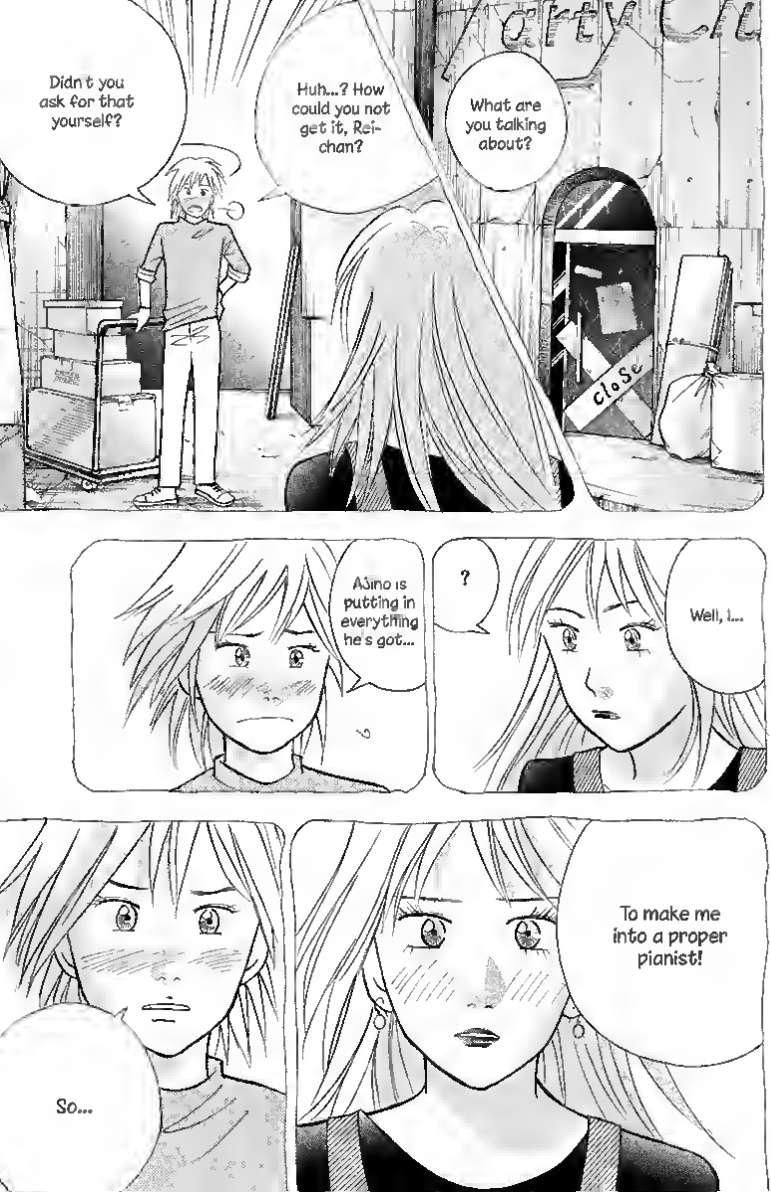

Rei-chan.


We are so...


If anything can actually make him happy...
Then what should we do...?
Won't be happy no matter how much we thank him.
Rei-chan! Ajino...

I suppose there's only that.
Huh? What?

Than done.
It's easier said...


Didn't you ask for that yourself?
Huh...? How could you not get it, Rei-chan?
What are you talking about?
Close
Asino is putting in everything he's got...
?
Well, I...
So...
To make me into a proper pianist!

That's the only thing I can do for him!

The [illegible] of My Life END

Artwork from "Song of the Long March"

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一色まこと

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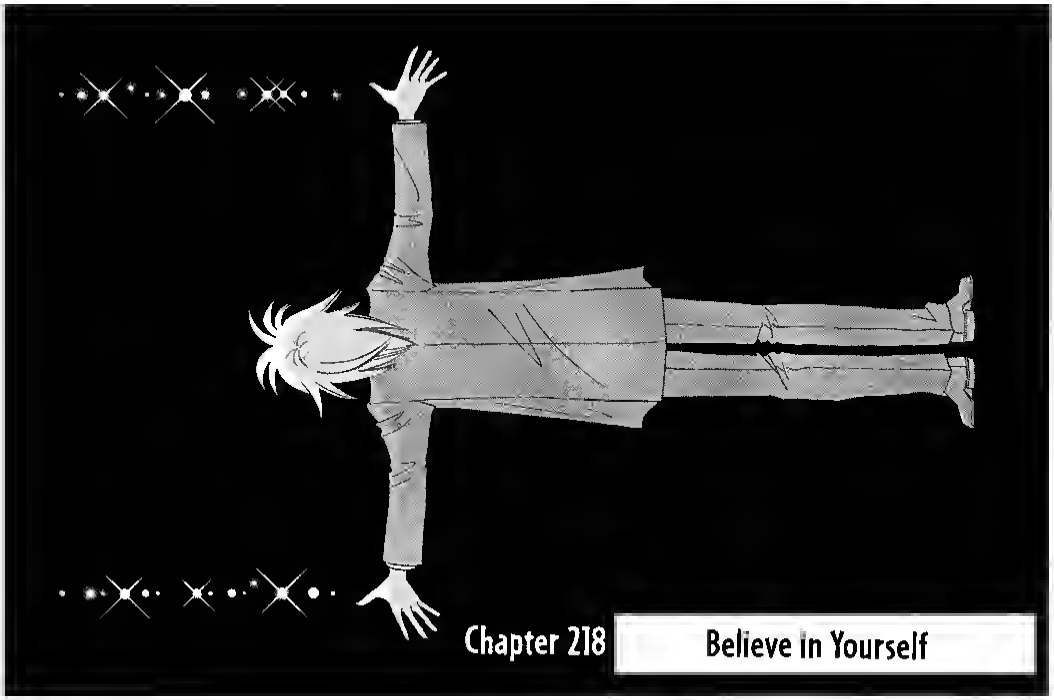
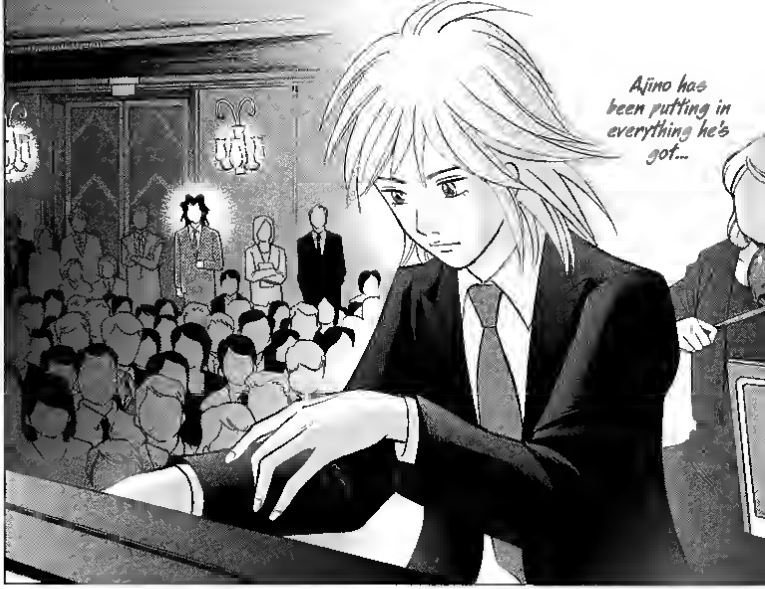
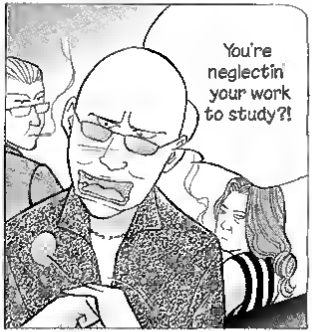

Chapter 218
Believe in Yourself

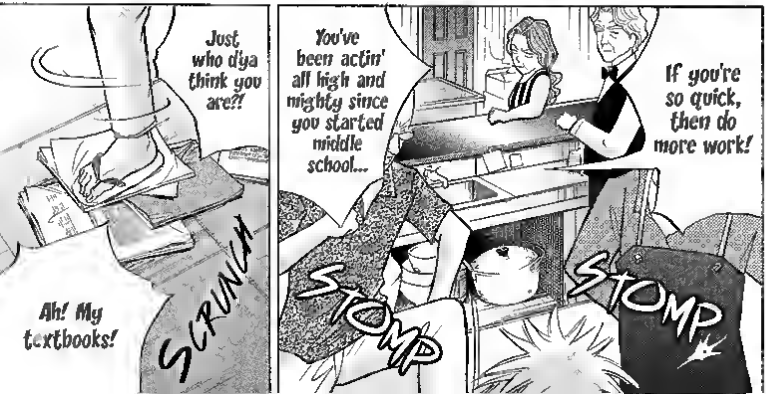

Ajino has been putting in everything he's got...

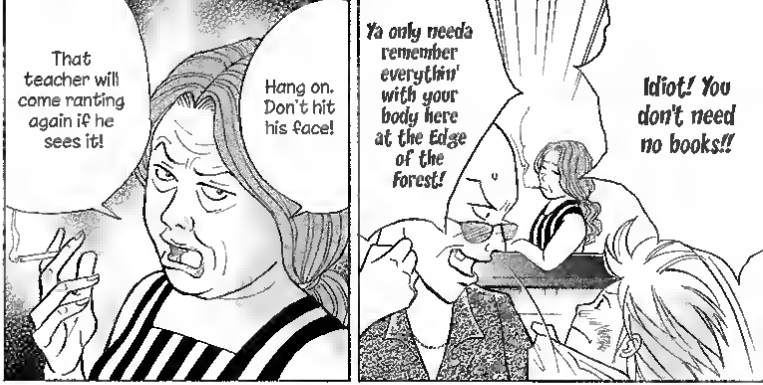
That's why I have no excuse to laze around.
That's what he's living for.
To make me into a proper pianist...

You gotta be kiddin?!

I finished all my work yesterday!!
I can do whatever I want after work, right?!


You're neglectin' your work to study?!


Just who d'ya think you are??
Ah! My textbooks!
SCRUNCH
You've been actin' all high and mighty since you started middle school...
If you're so quick, then do more work!
STOMP
STOMP


That teacher will come ranting again if he sees it!
Hang on. Don't hit his face!
Ya only needa remember everythin' with your body here at the Edge of the Forest!
Idiot! You don't need no books!!

Before long, it became a habit.
No matter how hard I got beaten up, it's all right as long as I protected my hands.

Is that all?

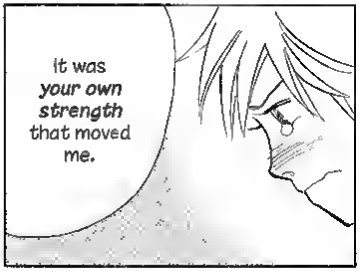
At that point, Ajino and I were no longer consumed by anger...
Thanks...
But the pile somehow seems to be bigger than before?
I was striving for my top priority.
Ajino had ventured to the Edge countless times, just to negotiate for my rights.
I had to pour all my effort into what I could do...
For the sake of buying myself more time.

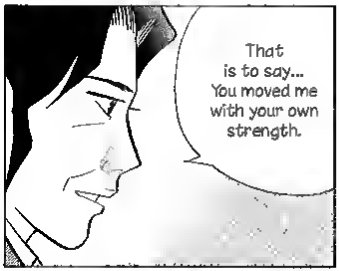
Even I was close to giving up.
When we ran into walls.
RIP
But no matter how hard he tried, there were still numerous times...
In any case, you're another step closer to getting out of that place!
It's indeed quite a rare book, so it took a while to find it. But good thing I managed.
A book from the library... I couldn't have gotten this myself.
Thanks, Sensei...
I didn't do it on my own strength...
You've already come this far on your own strength... Just give it another push!
You don't have the time to feel discouraged!

If it weren't for you, I'd just be a kid who couldn't even go to middle school!
Trash like me could never have done it without help!!
In order to get me enrolled at the middle school I'm going to...
Idiot. That's compulsory education!
You even...
That Ichinose-kun in Class A...
I heard his piano teacher knelt all the while till the boy got an interview!
That's...

That's... what I overheard from my teachers at school.
There's no such thing.
How could I have Ashino kneel for me?! I don't wanna go to school if that's true!
Then...
If you really think I had gone that far, you shouldn't let my effort go to waste!
Be good and go to school, study harder than anyone else...
Then graduate.

I can't afford to let your talent stay buried.
I wouldn't have helped you if you weren't gifted at playing the piano.


it was *your own strength* that moved me.


That is to say... You moved me with your own strength.

Is your own strength, and no one else's.
It really...
You hear that, Kai?

For you, I don't care how many times I have to swallow my pride.
I didn't actually get down on my knees, but if that were all it took to get you a place, I would've gladly done it.
Kai.
Say things like "never"...
Or "trash like me" ever again.
Sa don't...

No one else would fall on top of the piano like me, right?!
Chosen... More like...
You're the one chosen by the Piano in the Forest.
Don't you remember?
I can't do anything!
How can I?!
Believe in yourself.
Then... believe in me.

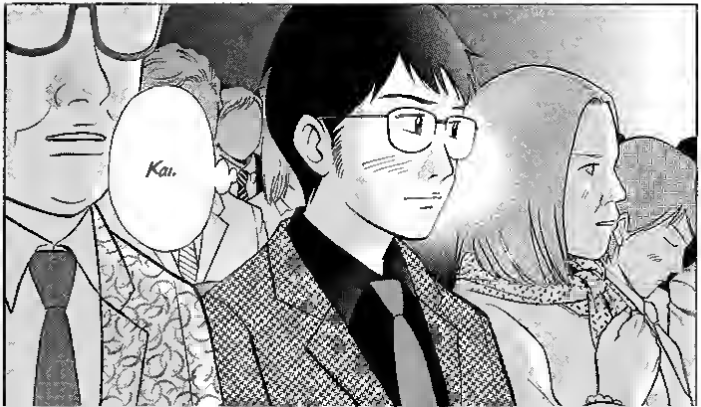
From now on, go on and prove it, little by little!
You possess the strength to seize what you want.
Shouldn't you be calling me Sensei?
Haha.
Believe in Ajino?

That's what Ajino said...
Well... It was just pep talk though...

Rei-chan! Rei-chan!
Grrm
Rei-chan is an amazing woman for raising someone like me! Even Ajino said so.
Kai is just as good as I thought!
Idiot... I was obviously pulling your leg...
Uhh...
Rush
There really seems to be some kind of incredible power hidden inside me!
Still, Rei-chan, I'm no longer the dumb kid I used to be.
Thud
Heheh.

Keep it down, Kai.
I must endure and make it through each day, even if things suck like today!!
So I have to do my best in what I can!!
Clack
Dash
I will surely achieve something in the end.
As my effort accumulates day by day...
Confidence in myself!
And that will surely be...

Believe in myself!
I will surely be able to...


Kai.

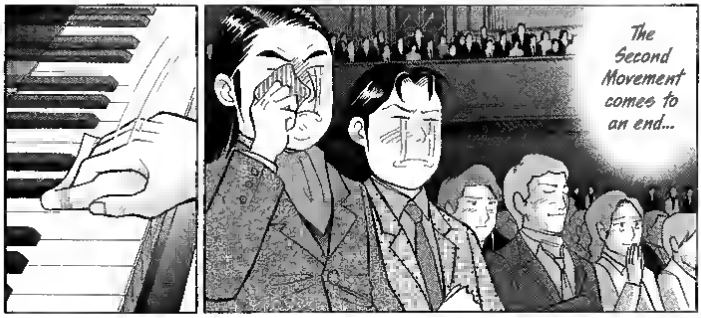
The lights have come back on if one's been paying attention.

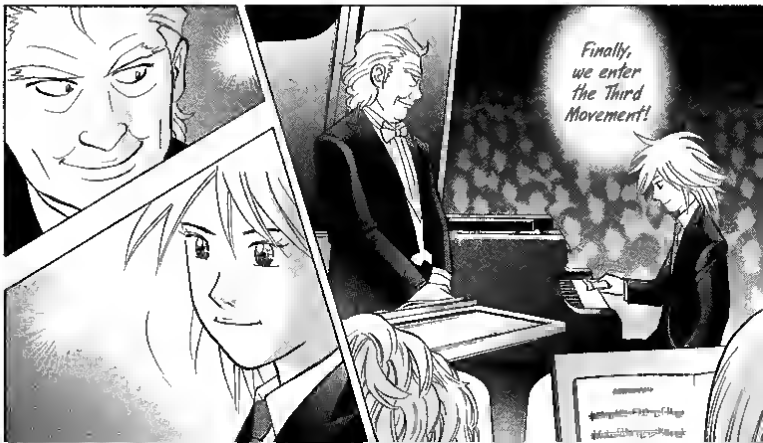
Find myself in the forest.
But even so, I still...

That's right...
This is the Forest of the Piano...
Be it Kord, or the orchestra...

They are all in the Forest.
That's the impression they're giving off.

With that,

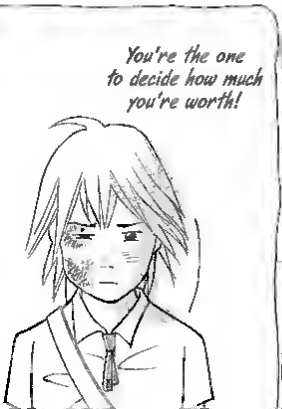

The Second Movement comes to an end...


Finally, we enter the Third Movement!

Right now... In this instant...

Though I've gained an infinite amount of things from Ajino,
The most important thing he's given me is still...

I do believe...
In myself!


You're the one to decide how much you're worth!

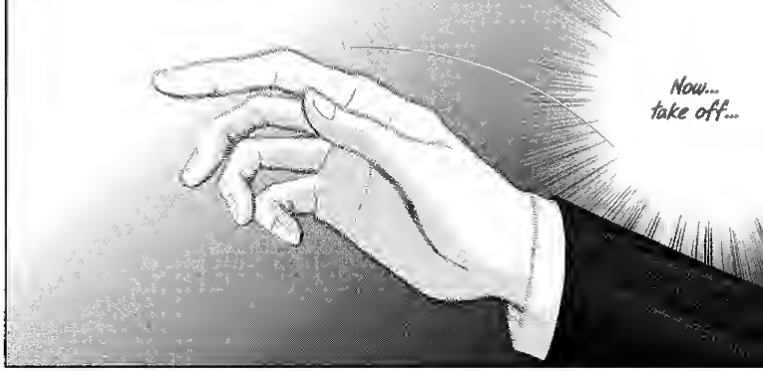
No matter what others think of you...
Stand tall!
Keep your head held high, Kai!

You already have everything you need.
It's all right!

Ever since I was a kid...
He's been repeating this... Time and time again...
Until I have the self-confidence...

The motivation to work hard and do my best!

Finally, we've come to the Third Movement!
Come on, Kai!
Stay carefree...
Relax...
And give it your utmost best!!


Now...
take off...

From this
Forest of the
Piano!!
Believe in Yourself. END

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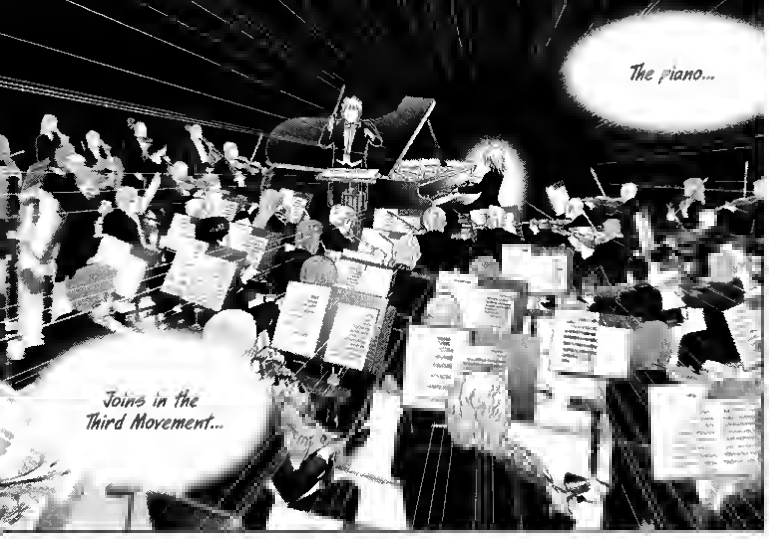
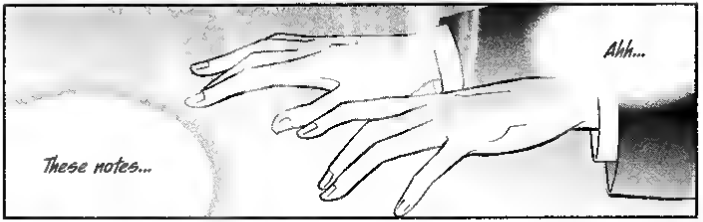
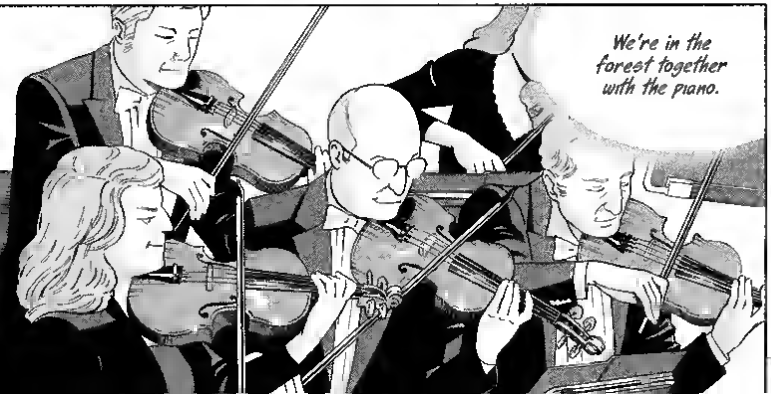

The piano...
Joins in the Third Movement...


Ahh...
These notes...


We're in the forest together with the piano.

Chapter 219

Forest Fantasy

Such...

Were the conductor and the orchestra still revelling the exquisite artistry in the last movement...?
The orchestral introduction sounded a bit slow...

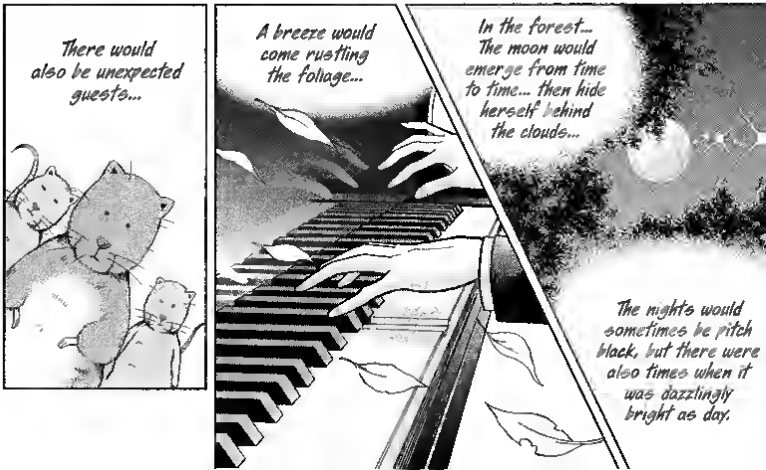
Such an amazing grasp of the tempo!

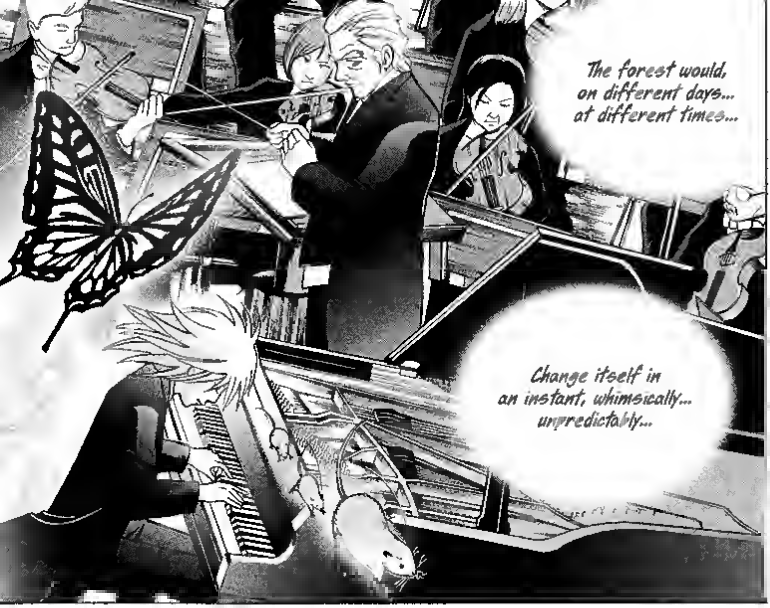
But the moment Ichinose dove into the mix...
He reined them in with his own tempo.

Could it be that this boy...
Has an incredible knack for ensemble playing as a concert pianist?!
Very naturally done, too...
I see. So this is where it's going.
If that's what the piano wants, we'll follow it's will!
Kai... Ichinose...

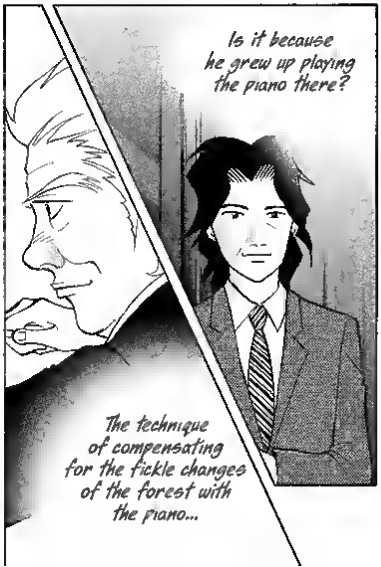
"This power of communication...
"Was cultivated by the forest," Ajino had told me.
STEINWAY & SO

It sounded like an implausible myth at first...


There would also be unexpected guests...
A breeze would come rustling the foliage...
In the forest... The moon would emerge from time to time... then hide herself behind the clouds...
The nights would sometimes be pitch black, but there were also times when it was dazzlingly bright as day.


The forest would, on different days... at different times...
Change itself in an instant, whimsically... unpredictably...

Seems to have latched itself onto Kai.


Is it because he grew up playing the piano there?
The technique of compensating for the fickle changes of the forest with the piano...

As if it was the most natural thing in the world.
Of course I was surprised to find Kai playing the piano I had abandoned without a second thought...
At first...
...
What really shocked me was...
However...
What's with the piano today?
...
A year after the Piano in the Forest had burned down...

Ah. The landlady opened the window for me.
She said it's fine even if people can hear since it's daytime.
I've never heard it so loud before...
Why is it audible from so far away?
That's 'cause the wind is blowing... The music is riding it.
Huh? Ah...
Ajino's ears really are sharp!
No, but... I could hear it... even beyond the normal distance of sound transmission.
I almost thought I was hearing things...
There were times when...
!!?

Kai! What's with this playing?
Hmm? You noticed?
And here I was trying to make it seem unintentional...
Huh?
Well... You seem to be in a bad mood... so I'm trying to send some soothing notes your way.
What?
Haha....
It's the same thing as trying to subdue an angry, riled-up snake.
But you noticed, so it's a fail for me!
I wasn't supposed to let you notice. If it had been a snake, I would've got bitten!

The Piano in the Forest...
Had nurtured Kai in ways beyond my wildest imagination.
This...
Is almost like a fantasy!!
But now I remember!

In forests... trees have some sort of unfathomable "power"...
I've experienced it before in my own childhood.

When I got lost in a forest in Germany, my grandmother's home country.
That was...

I had wandered into the depths of the forest...
And was only found two days later... under the shelter of a gigantic beech.

"You'll be safe here with me!" I could feel the beech telling me.
Bonk
The adults wouldn't believe it, but...
Clack
...Only Grandma called the beech the "Tree of Annunciation"...
"These things are possible," she had said.
Fufu.
It is indeed a fantasy.
But listening to this performance, even such fantasies seem possible.
The piano was protected by a great big tree...

Kai Ichinose could actually be a child nurtured by the forest.

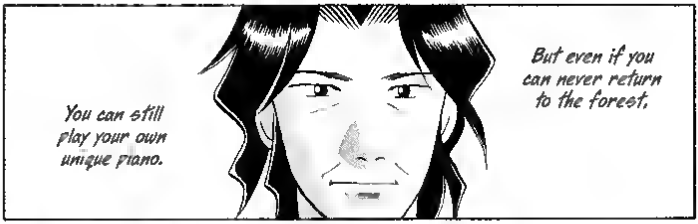
It's not my imagination!
Just listen to these clear and expansive notes...

I seem to be doing well, too.
I'm in a lovely mood.

I feel the increasing urge...
To march forward!!
Is it because of the forest?
Is it the effect of being bathed in the forest?
A primordial force is surging out from Mother Nature!
It's been my dream to play surrounded by dancing wind.

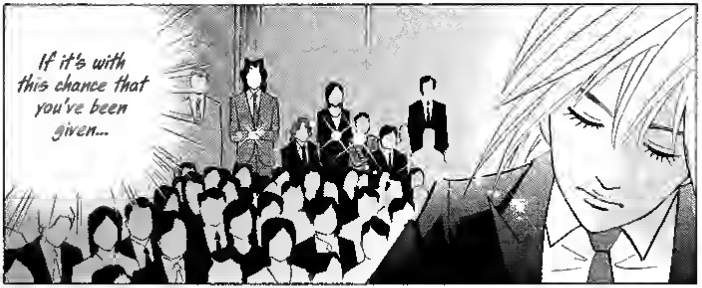
So long as we're together...
With the piano!!

Right now, you're in the forest.
Kai...


You can still play your own unique piano.
But even if you can never return to the forest,

Take off!
From here on...
Kai...

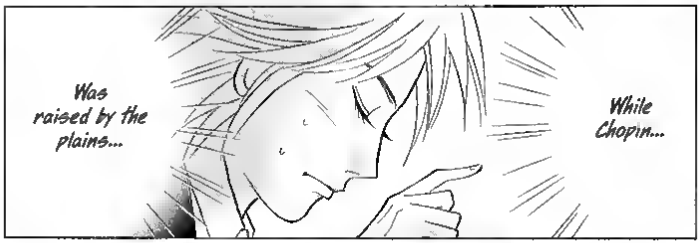
Here in Warsaw...
Ride the wind...
If it's with the Warsaw Phil...

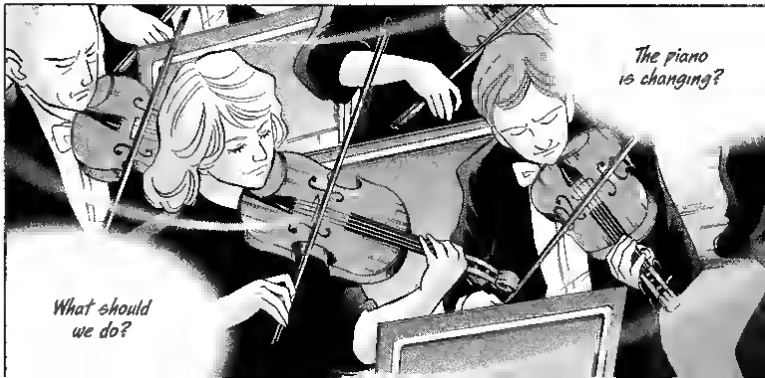

If it's with this chance that you've been given...

Can you break out...
And take off from this forest?!

After all, you're with the orchestra now...
You are no longer alone...!!

Was raised by the forest...
I...


Was raised by the plains...
While Chopin...


The piano is changing?
What should we do?

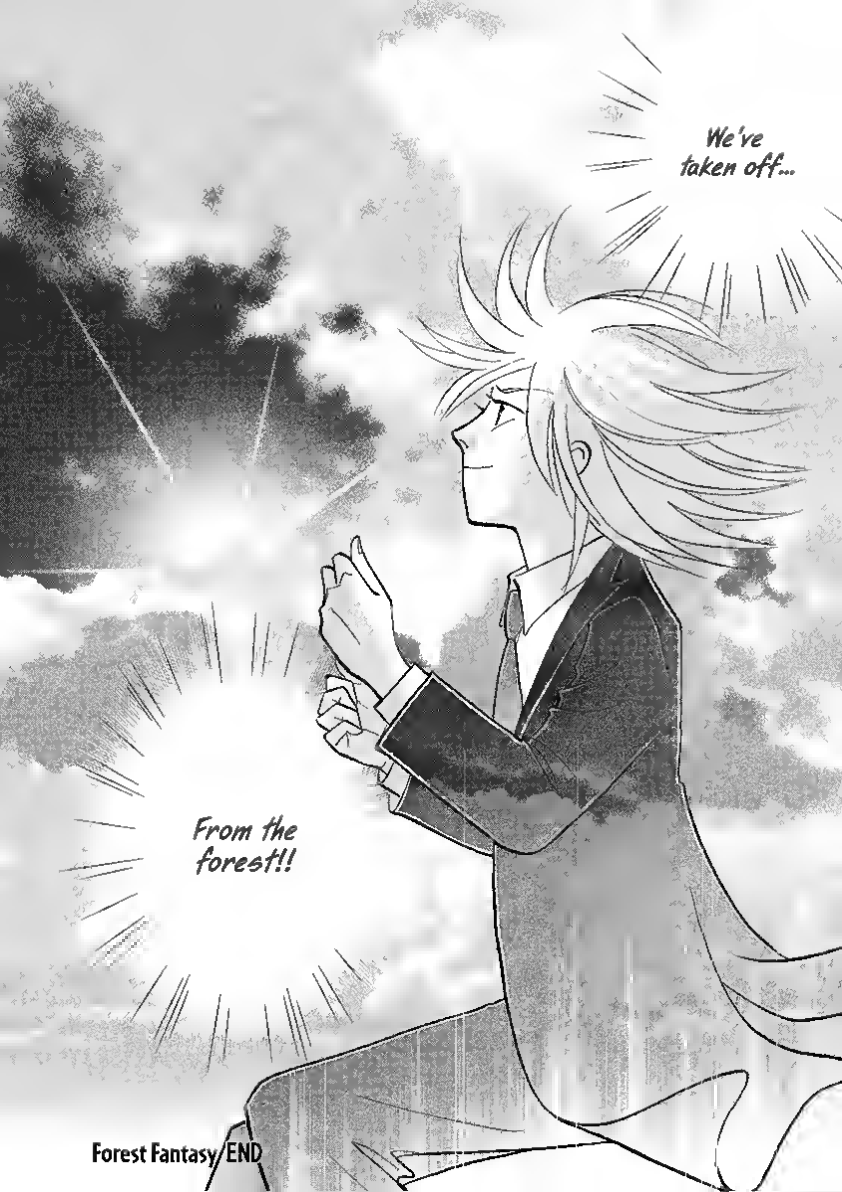
Poland stretches off in every direction...
With its far-reaching plains...

Where to?
Let's go, as long as we can follow...
The piano is going further?!

You want to spread the music?
Not enough?

The Wild...
The sweeping plains that stretch off in every direction were what made Chopin.
Blue...
So you're headed toward the plains?
Ah... Poland...
We've all run over them, haven't we?
The sweeping plains...
Chopin grew up on the plains.

Yonder!
Behold!



Forest Fantasy/END

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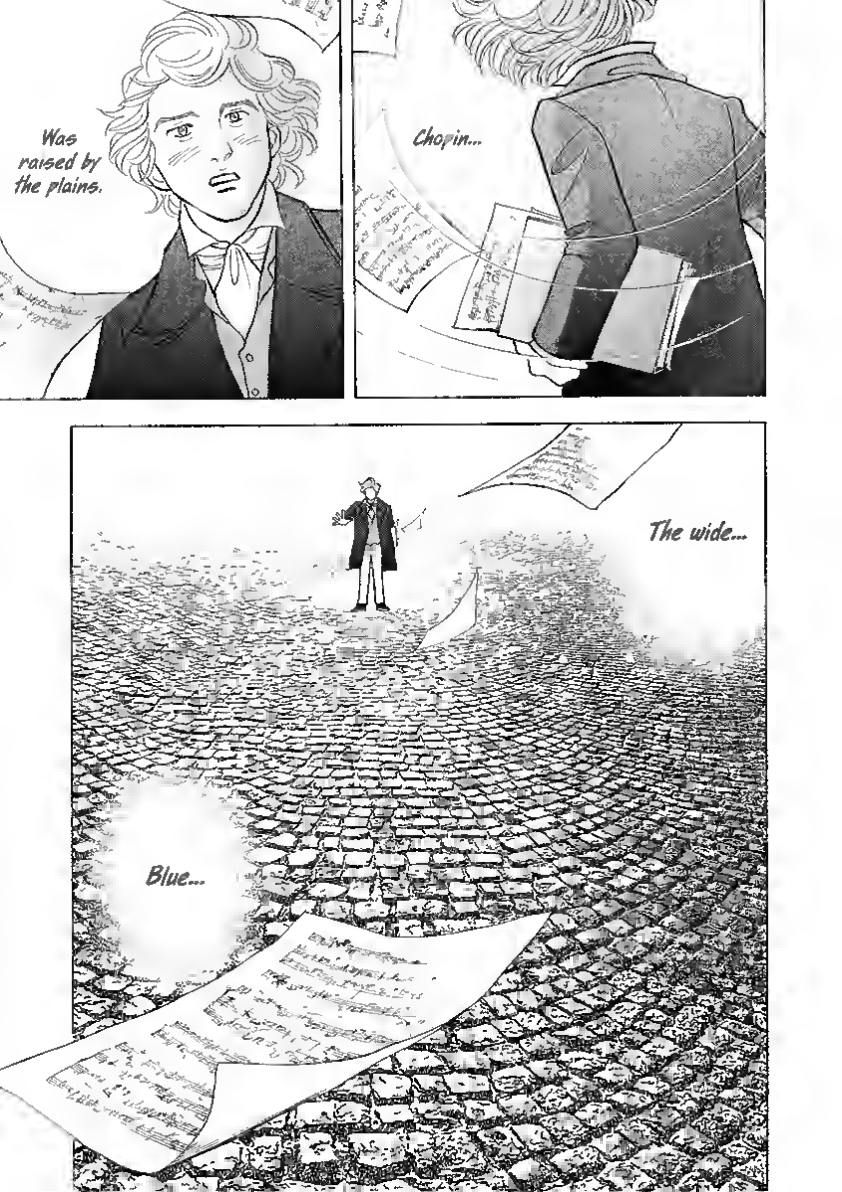
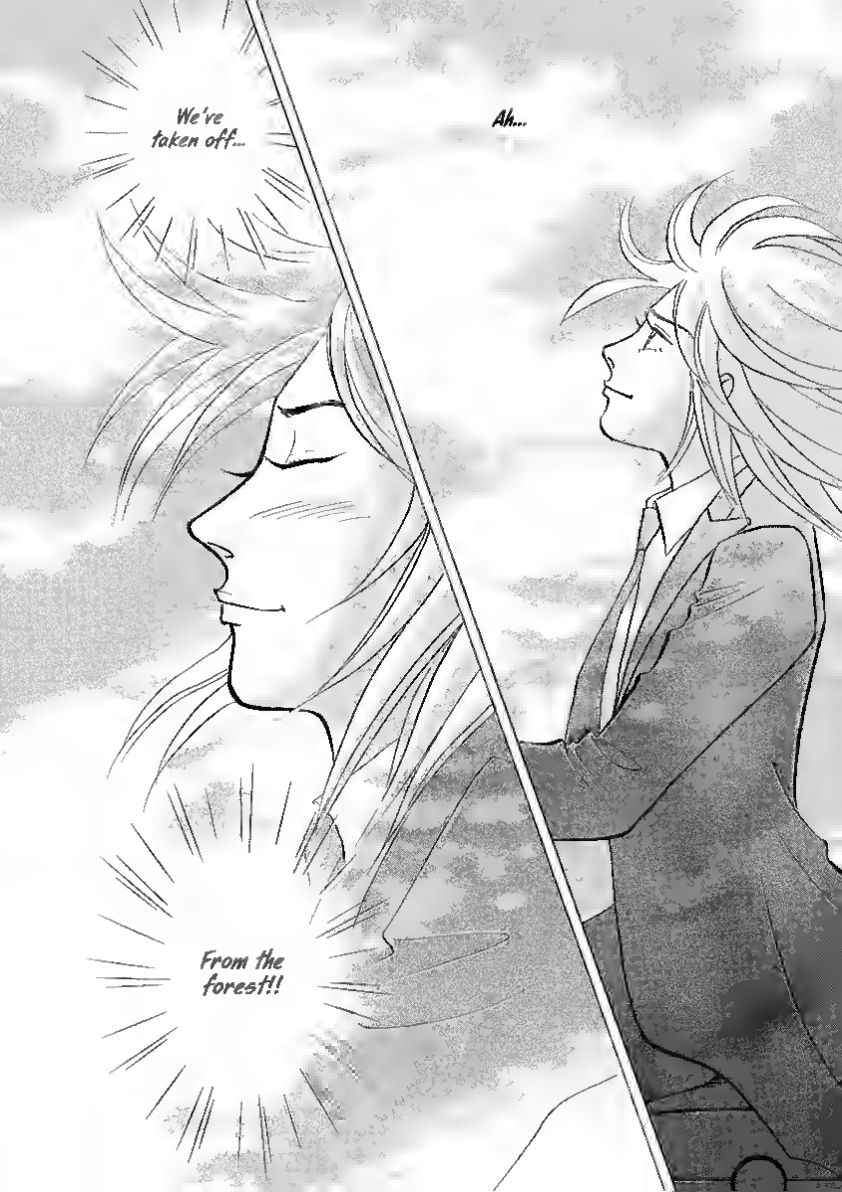

Was raised by the plains.
Chopin...
The wide...
Blue...

Chapter 220
Freedom
Yonder!
Behold!


We've taken off...
Ah...
From the forest!!

Whoa...
I'm still in the hall!
I know it's just my imagination...
Am I... soaring in the sky...?
So what's with this frightening sense of liberation??!! And the music sounds...
But my body actually feels like it's floating on air.

Like it can spread even further...
Kai.
Ahh... These notes ...

These notes are Kai's...

Original music from back when he was little!

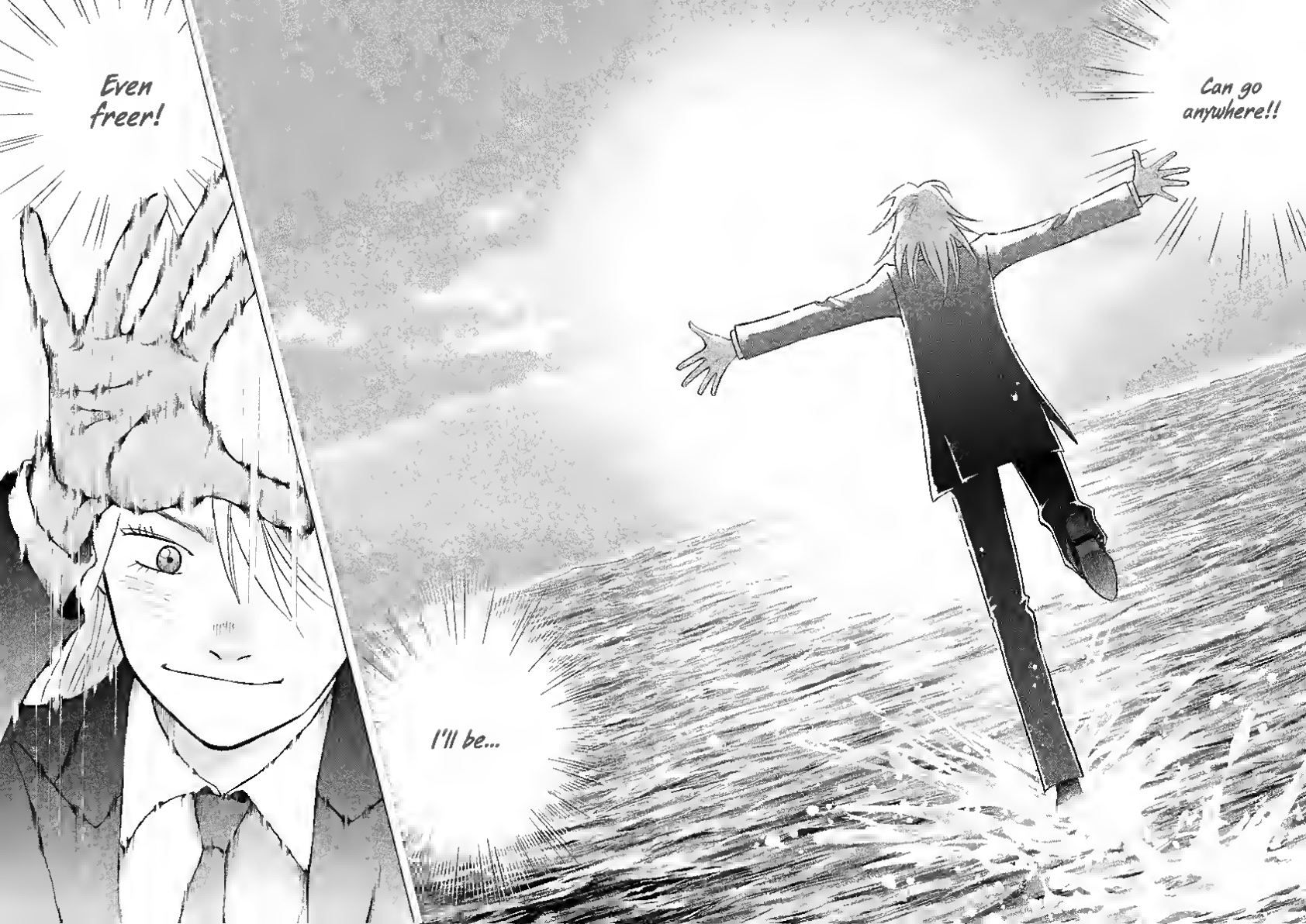
The piano playing just changed?
The...
No... But something definitely feels different.
Have...
The breadth of the music seems to have increased?

Having left the forest... I wonder where I am now...
This place feels even more spacious... As if I'd been set loose in the sky.

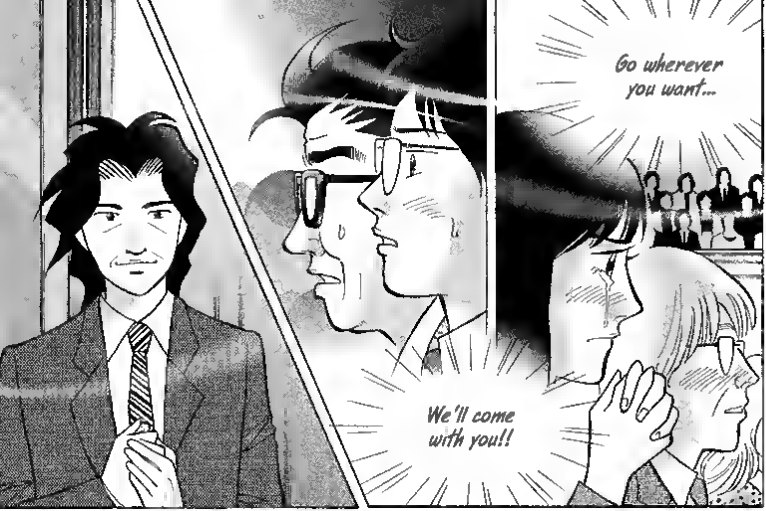
Don't tell me even I got dragged along to wherever this ever-spreading music is going?!
Where the hell am I?!
Don't....
Kai... Ichinose...
WHOAAAAA
Take me anywhere you want!! I'll even follow you to the end of the world!!

The "Piano in the Forest" will forever be within me.
STEINWAY
Even if I can no longer return to the forest...
I see...

In that case, I...
Without a doubt...
It is right here...


Even freer!
I'll be...
Can go anywhere!!

More freely!!
What?
You still want more?
I'll play...
I'll go...
Even further...
Fufu... You really want to break out of this hall?
Why... Why not?!
It's well within my power to keep up!!


Go wherever you want...
We'll come with you!!

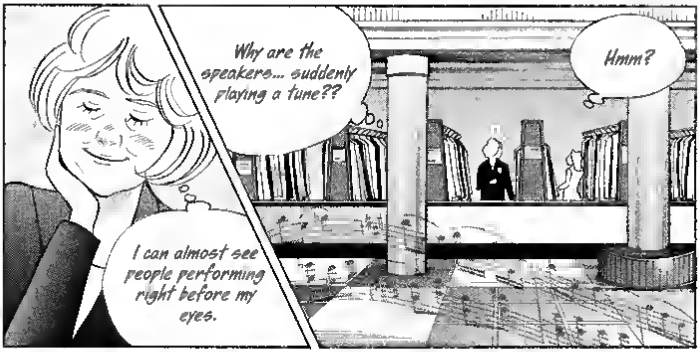
The Piano of the Forest has evolved...
STEINWAY & SONS

Nothing at all can stifle it.
It's spreading everywhere...

Free...
Infinitely...
Infinitely...

And further...
It's spreading further...
Far-reaching...
Further...

Ah... That song...!
A Krakowiak.
Music from my hometown...


Hmm?
Why are the speakers... suddenly playing a tune??
I can almost see people performing right before my eyes.

Everywhere.

!
TAXI
Hmm?
That's strange.
Kai...
I'm listening
properly!
My radio
should be
off...
TAXI
Oh!
That song...
It's Chopin,
isn't it?!

No way! Aren't you just hearing things?
Huh? Can't you hear it?
I've been hearing it for a while now...
It somehow smells like a forest, doesn't it?

Chopin?
Huh?
NASTROJ
?

Huh?
Huh?
That's right, Kai!
You're doing well!

Is the kind of playing I want to hear from Kai...
Yes. This...
This...

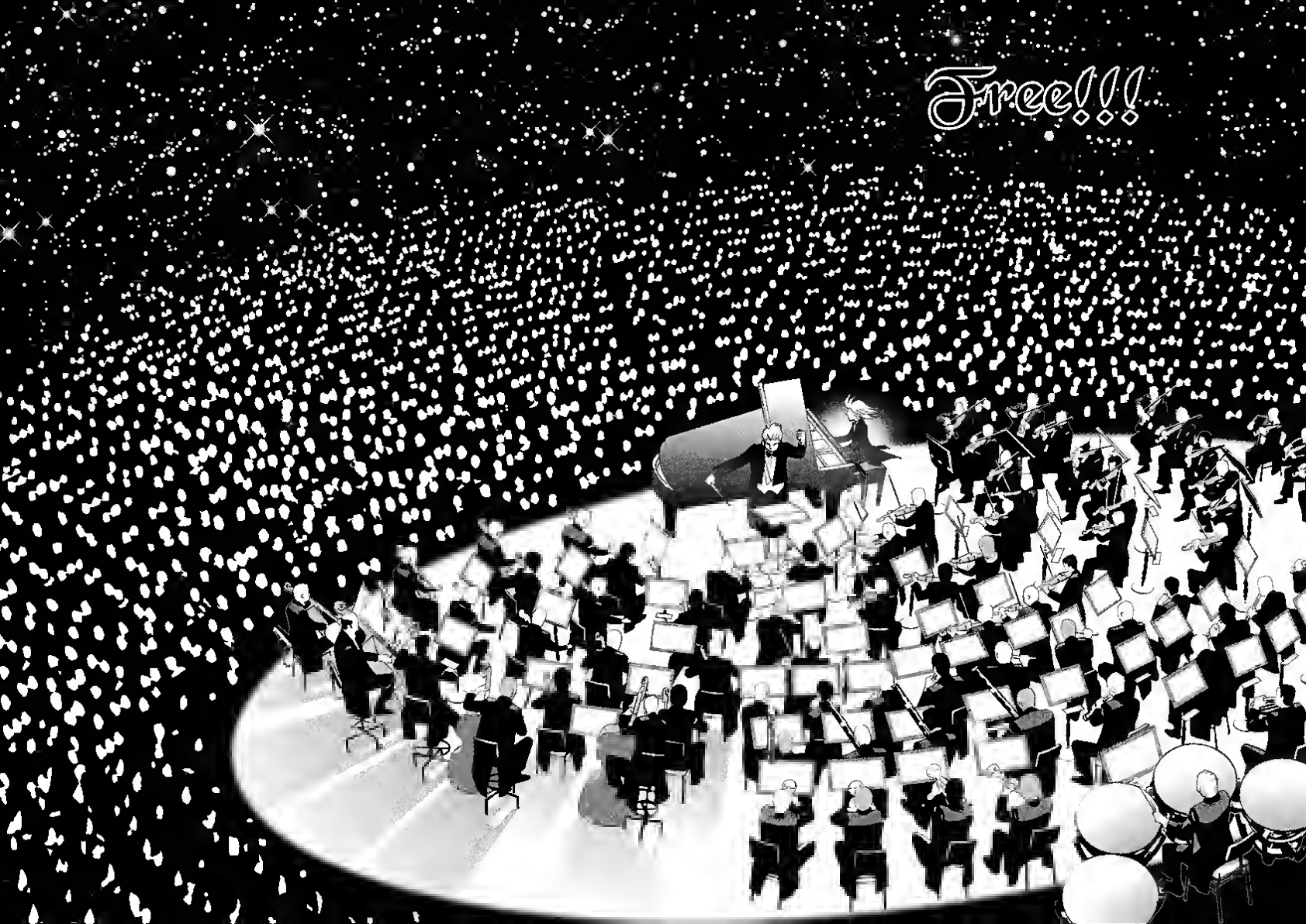
Is the kind of music I have been seeking...

So this...
I see...

Are blithely...
Merrily...
This performance of Chopin's No.1...
Kai's piano playing...
Freely...

Soaring through the sky.

This song...
Everyone...
Or the listeners...
Has liberated everyone!

Ahh... Music...
Music is meant to be this...

Free!!!

Free!!

We've entered the final coda!!

A... A first-class performance.
And now...

Freedom END

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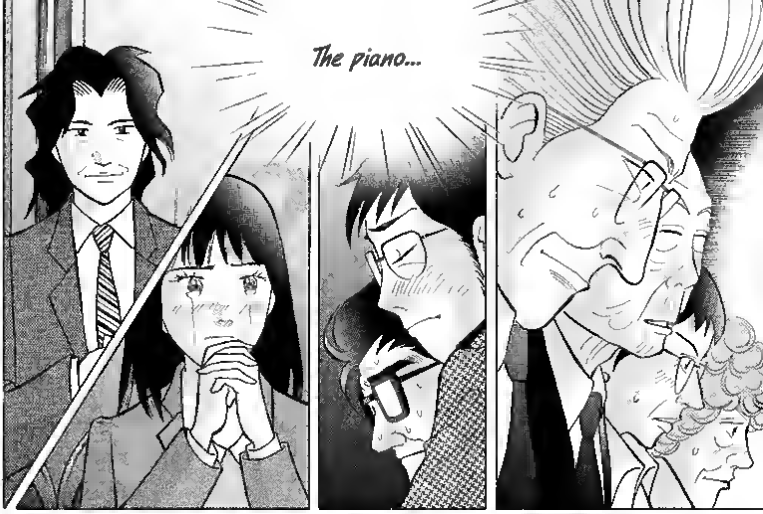

The piano...

Is entering
the final coda!!

I...

I am the son of a prosti-tute!!
I was born and raised in the red-light district known as the "Edge of the Forest"...

The forest adjacent to my home was my backyard...
The piano abandoned there...
Was my irreplaceable companion.

Friends...
And then there were the crazy antics of my loved one...
There were quarrels...
Conflicts...
And my dearest teacher...
My life hasn't been all smooth sailing.

But there have always been people supporting me when it counted.

Before I knew it...

Constantly...
I have become...

Perpetually surrounded by warm and tender people.

They...
Are the reason why I'm here!

By playing the piano...
I want to play the piano!!
What do I want to do?!
What do you want to achieve, Kai?
I want my music...
I...

To resound throughout the world!!
Kai...
You've done it...

Is filled with your scent...
You see? Every place...

Kai...
Ichinose!!
What
kind of playing
is that?!!

Right from the start...
It's been so intense...

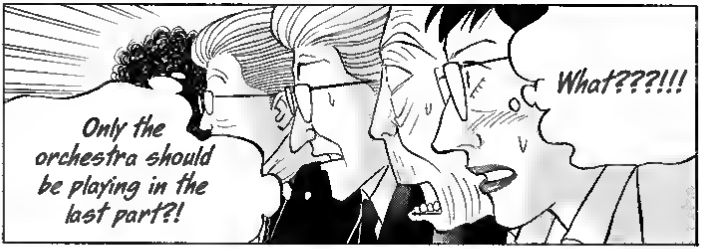
So there really is such enthralling piano playing?!
So warm...
So fiery...

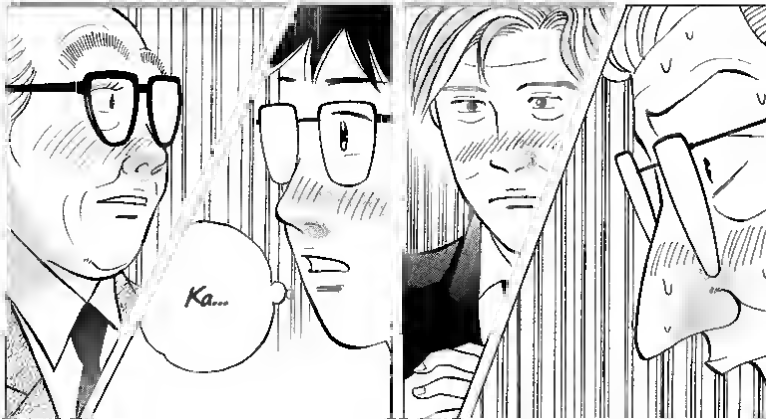
At a moment like this...
Forget all of that...
No, forget it!!

I wish I could keep indulging in this music!!
I wish this moment would last forever!!

Here comes Kai's...
One last note...
But even so, in the end...
Noooo... Don't end just like that...
He's done!!
Huh??!!
He...

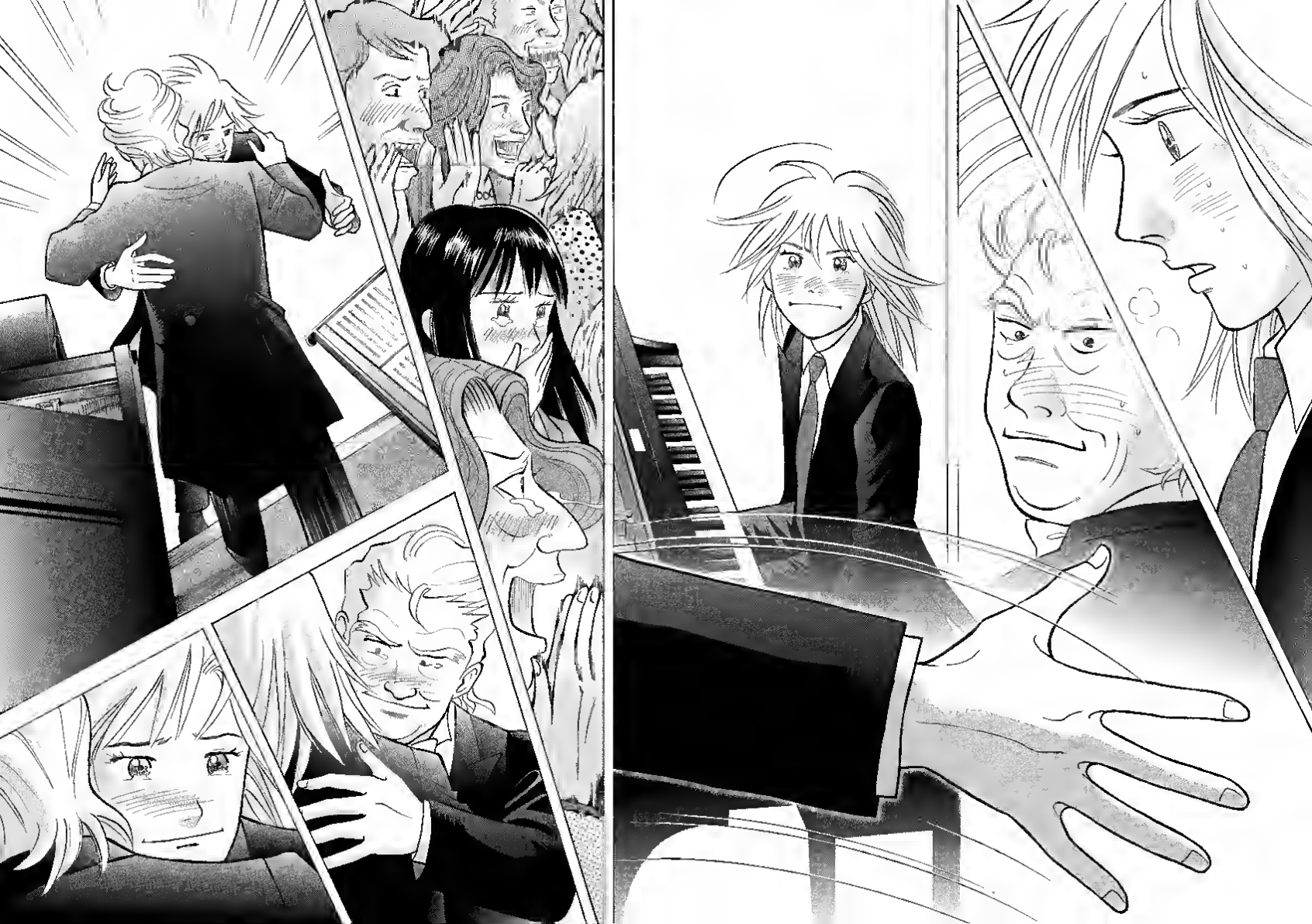
He kept playing??!!
He didn't stop!!

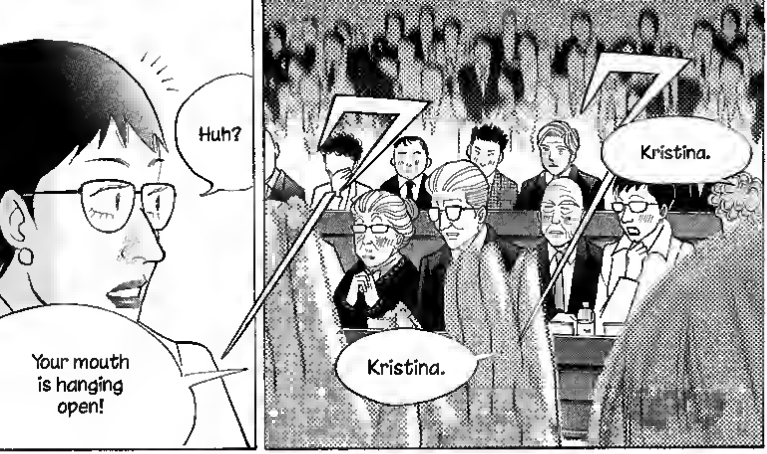

What???!!!
Only the orchestra should be playing in the last part?!


Ka...

He's playing an accompaniment...
Kai...
Somehow playing together with the orchestra...
Kai is...

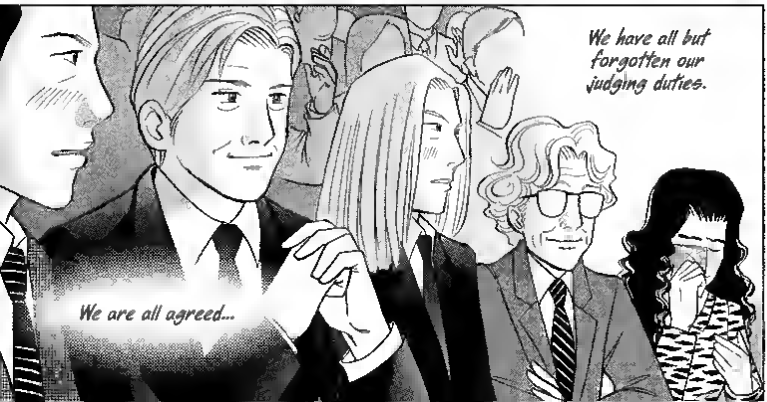
Together with the orchestra...
Is playing the last part...



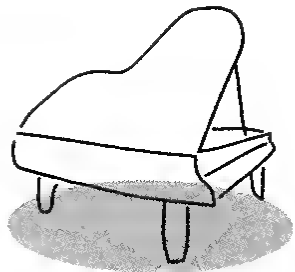

Huh?
Your mouth is hanging open!
Kristina.
Kristina.

Who cares about adjudication and whatnot now.

Oops!
Haha... We should all give one another a quick look, eh?


We have all but forgotten our judging duties.
We are all agreed...

Together END



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PIANO NO MORI

by ISSHIKI Makoto
一色まこと

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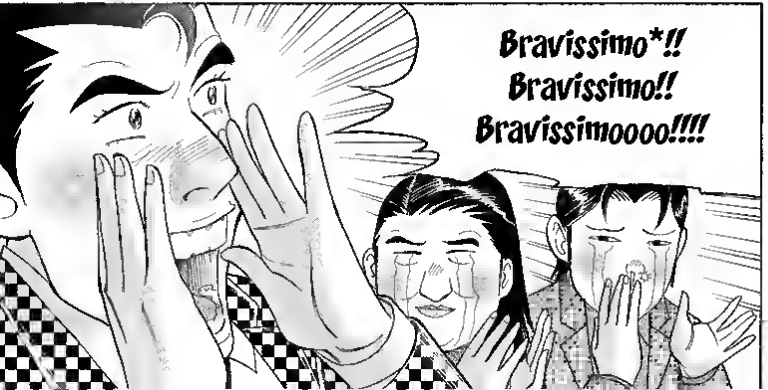
Kai!! Kai!!
You did it!! You really did it!!
Kai did it!!
WHOAAAAA
Ichinoseeee
I wanna yell for the entire world to hear!!
Ichinose Kai reigns supreme on this stage!!
Ichinoseeeee

Chapter 222
Ajino

You bunch of dickhead judges?!
Haha..
Well then, what are you gonna do...

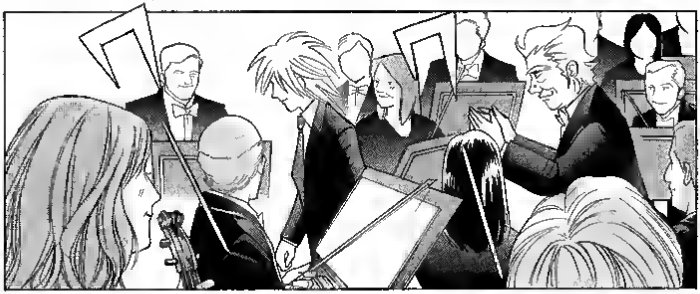
Do you actually understand just how much his music is worth??!!

*T/N AN ITALIAN WORD USED TO EXPRESS THE HIGHEST PRAISE TO A PERFORMER. 'BRAVISSIMA' IF THE PERFORMER IS FEMALE.



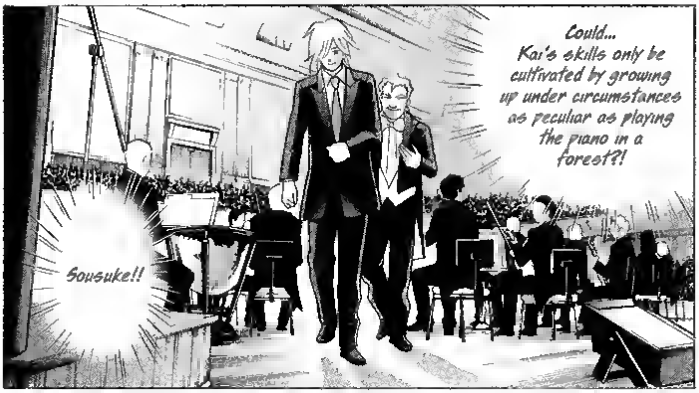
What... What serendipity.
To think Wei Pang isn't the only Oriental musician I can refer to the Director of Carnegie Hall*...
Th...That famous gay is shouting his head off.
"Bravissimo" is praise even higher than "Bravo." I'm with him though!

*A CONCERT VENUE IN MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY. ONE OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS VENUES IN THE WORLD WITH ITS OWN EXTREMELY EXCLUSIVE ARTISTIC PROGRAM.



Sousuke!!
Have you ever listened to a No.1 like this?

Heh.
I still have a ways to go, don't I.

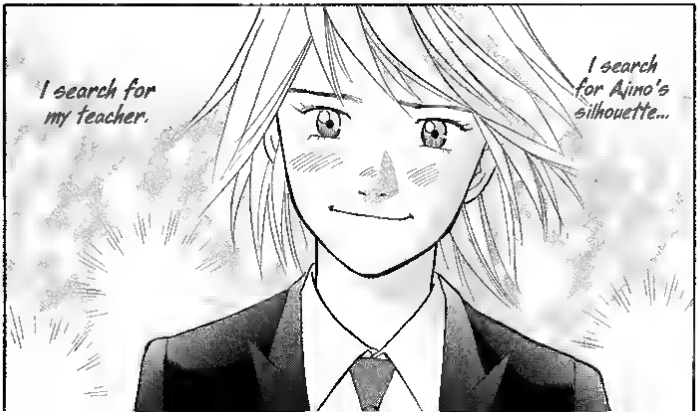

Could... Kai's skills only be cultivated by growing up under circumstances as peculiar as playing the piano in a forest?!
Sousuke!!

Is it your true ambition to put on such a performance?

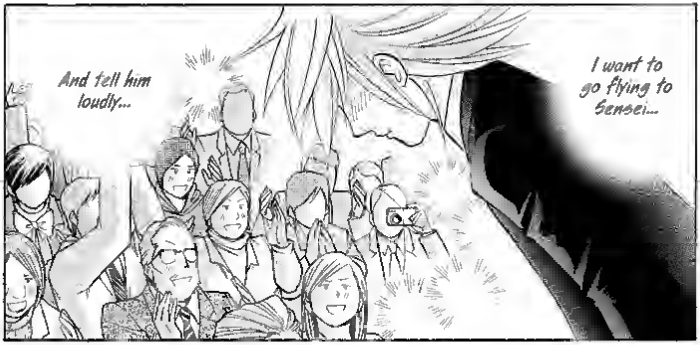
BRAVO
Ajino!

AAAA
Ajino!

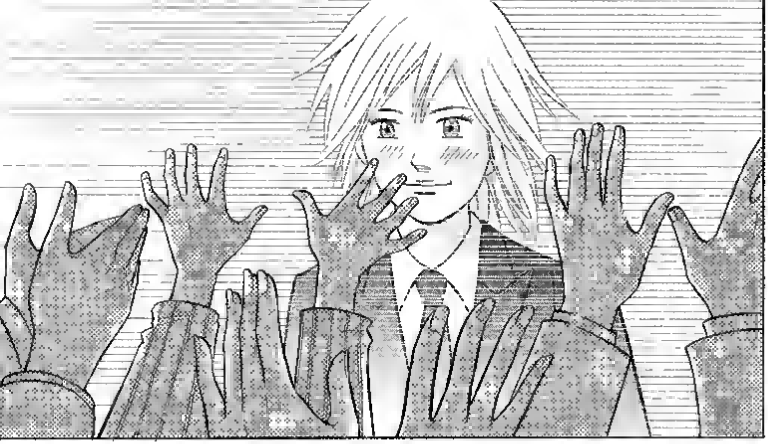
And the indescribable sense of achievement...
Amidst the deafening cheers and applause,


I search for my teacher.
I search for Ajino's silhouette...

Ajino!
Ajino!


And tell him loudly...
I want to go flying to Sensei...

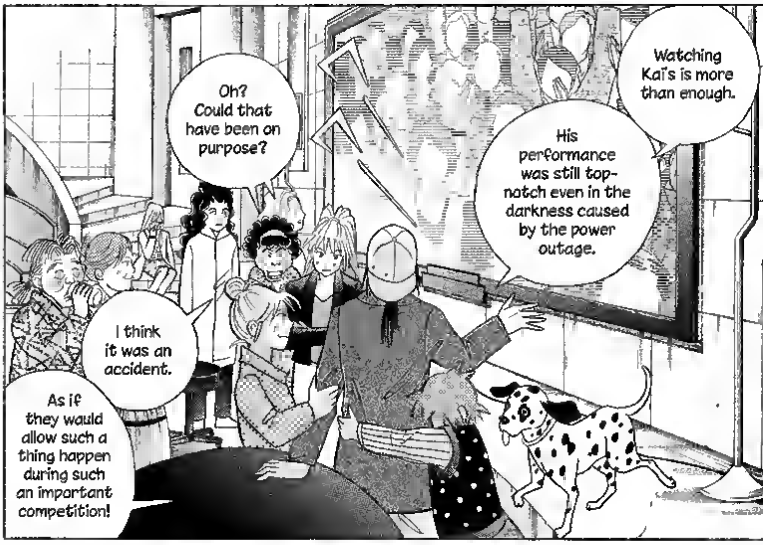
"I did it!!"
"Sensei!"



How many curtain calls does that make?
The applause shows no signs of stopping, so he still can't leave the stage!
He... He's amazeballs...

With that... Kai's sure to win, isn't he?
HUH??!!

You haven't even watched the performances given by other contestants, Ben-san.
Hold your horses! Don't believe the wards of a child!
That...
That's for sure, Ben-san!


Watching Kai's is more than enough.
His performance was still top-notch even in the darkness caused by the power outage.
Oh? Could that have been on purpose?
I think it was an accident.
As if they would allow such a thing happen during such an important competition!

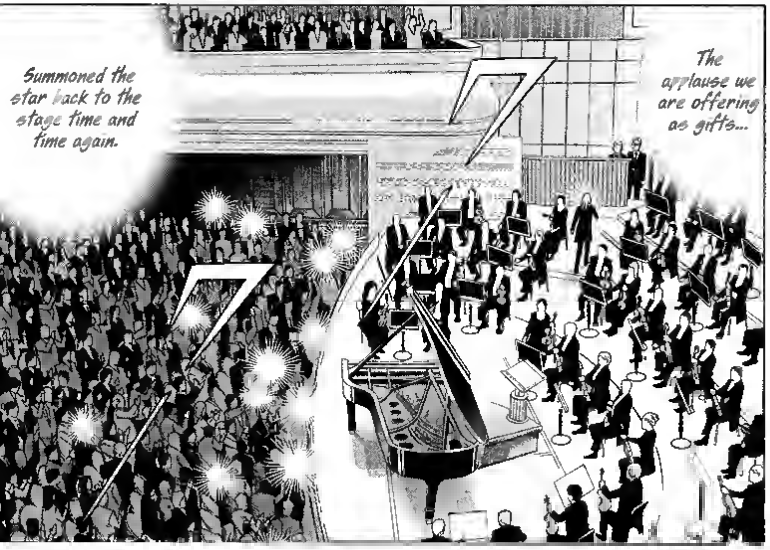
I never did give it a proper thought...
Fufu.
Ehhhhh
Why don't you try to get used to that?
Look... Kai wasn't fazed because he is used to playing the piano in the forest when it's pitch black.

Sae-chan, you need a handkerchief?
Here, take it...
I'm crying non-stop 'cause it's just so moving...
Th-Thanks... It's all right!
He may be all smiles...
Just look at him now. He's no different than any ordinary kid.
That's not true.
He's so great that I feel the gap widening between us...
Rei-chan, Kai really was amazing.
Kai is certainly great when he's playing the piano, but...

But he looks like a lost child who isn't sure what to do!
Really?
Yep! That's the face he's making!

Ichinoseeeee

Shouted his name again and again...
We...


Summoned the star back to the stage time and time again.
The applause we are offering as gifts...

We...
TECHNOSEEEE

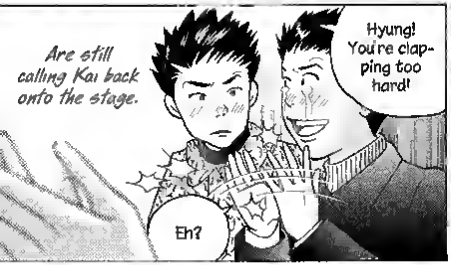
Have all but forgotten about the next performer.

Wwww
Wwww

Knock
Knock

I can't even see Kai-kun through all these tears...
Even so, we...

How many curtain calls does this make?
Young Master Kaaaaaai!!


Are still calling Kai back onto the stage.
Hyung! You're clapping too hard!
Eh?

Just how excited we are...

Just how moved we are...
Everyone wants to convey to you...
What a bummer.

Kai!!

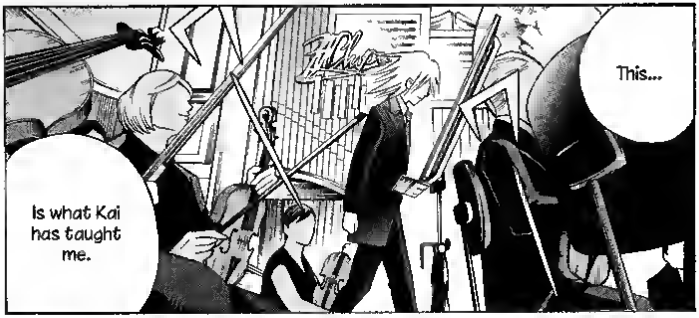
Can you feel it?!

Shuhei...

You have despair written all over your face.
Dad, are you all right?
Huh?

By such a rival throughout your life... Shuhei...
You will be shadowed...

Dad, I'm really pumped!
I'm certain that I won't have any regrets even if I have to trail behind music that I admire throughout my career!


This...
Is what Kai has taught me.

Of course, I'll also be watching out for you!
Ah...
Shuhei.

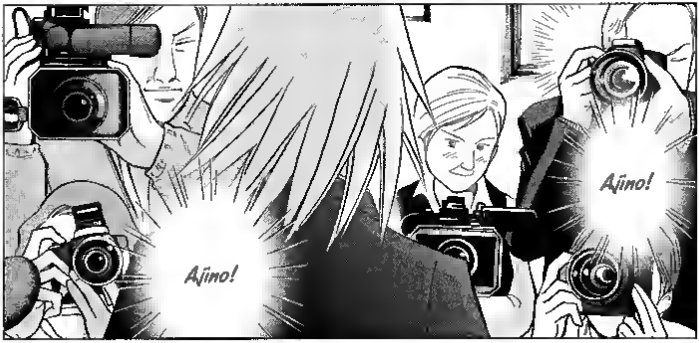
I want to share...
Is Ajino... waiting outside right now?
This joy and exhilaration...
And these indescribable emotions...
Ajino!
You're right...
You're absolutely right, Shuhei.

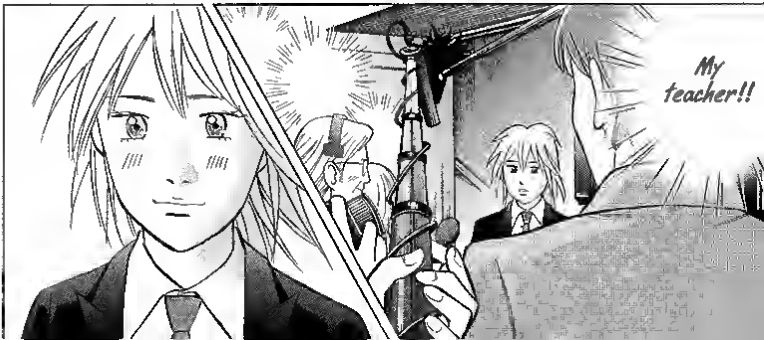
with Ajino...
As soon as I can!
I want him to experience them too...

Ajino!
I want to see Sensei right now!
As soon as possible!
That he won't be there.
I'm worried...
Wouldn't be waiting for me outside.
Perhaps Ajino...

Maybe Ajino...
Won't be standing before me again, since he has already left me...
Ajino!
I'm so worried...
I could cry.
Did you listen properly?
I played!!

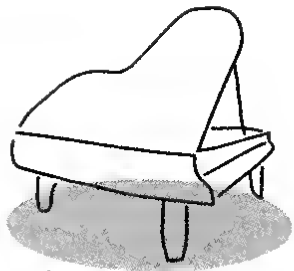
My promise with Ajino!!
At last, I fulfilled...


Ajino!
Ajino!


My teacher!!

Ajino!
I...

Ajino END



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Were you listening?
Asino...

My promise with you!
I fulfilled...

Really?
It was the best piano playing ever.
Yeah. You did it.

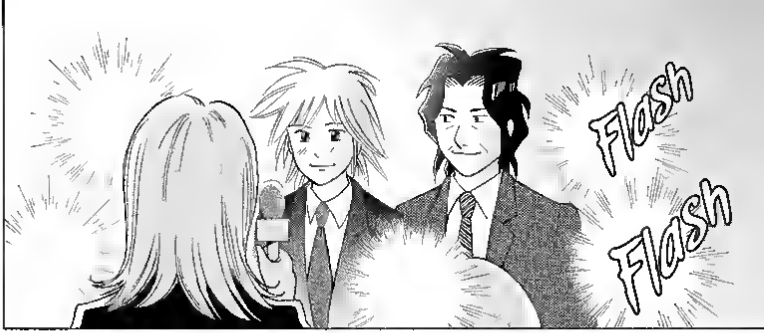
Yeah. I was shocked.
It went beyond all expectations.

I mean it.
Have I ever lied to you?

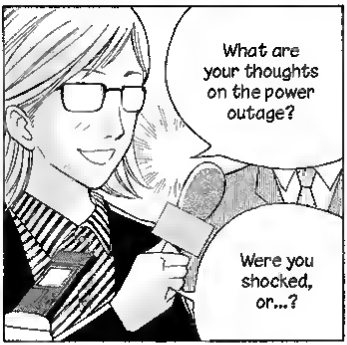
You mean it?
I will never ever forget... these shining eyes...

Haha... That's mean!
You have! Many times!
This touching moment...

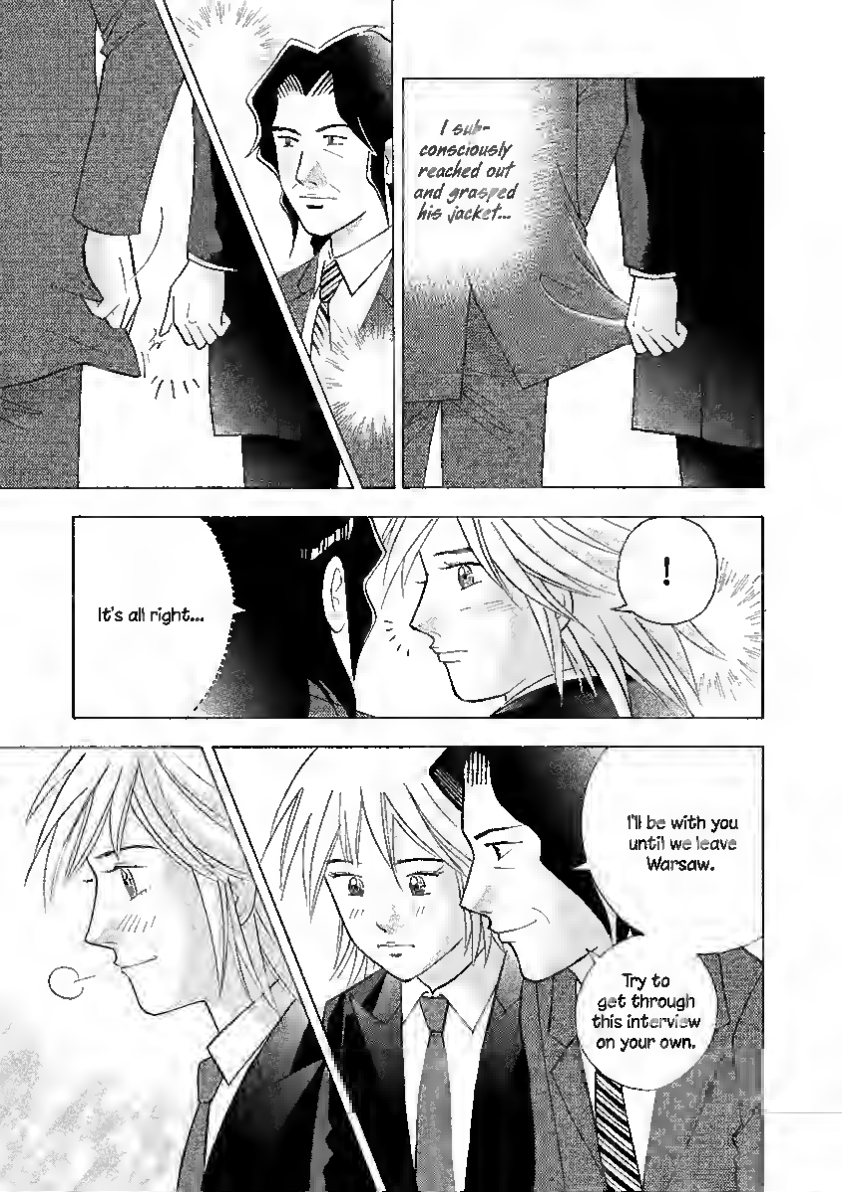
Chapter 223 Upset


Flash
Flash

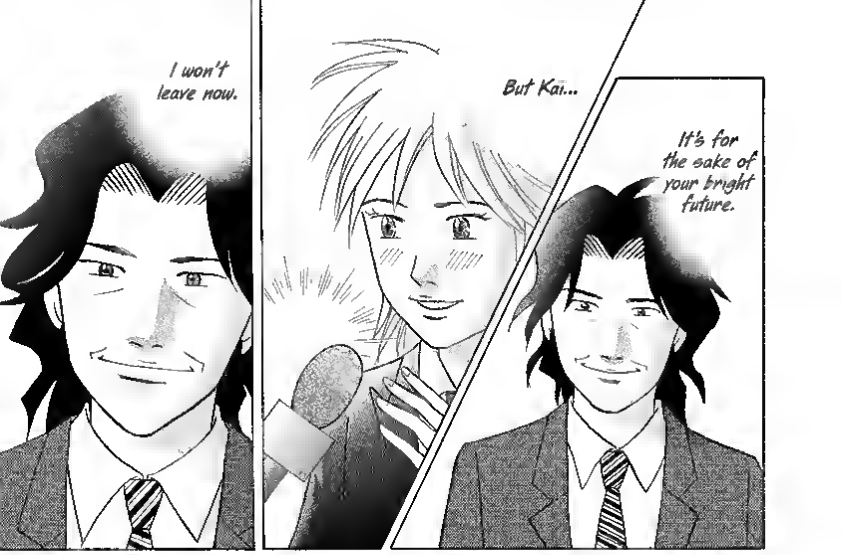
I wasn't expecting it, so it was rather shocking.
But I was a bit blinded by the lights before it happened, so...


What are your thoughts on the power outage?
Were you shocked, or...?

But for some reason...
Ajino didn't leave my side during the interview.

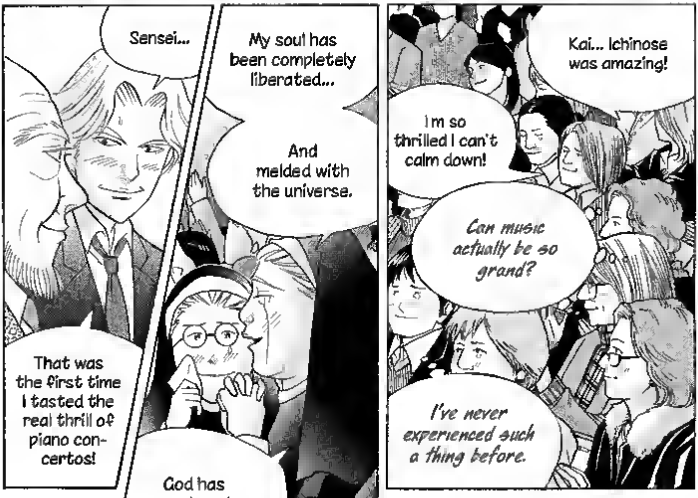

I sub-consciously reached out and grasped his jacket...
!
It's all right...
I'll be with you until we leave Warsaw.
Try to get through this interview on your own.

Kai...
Feels anxious about leaving me.
He's still little more than a child.
Even with that splendid performance,
You have a long, long road ahead of you.
However, this is a good place for me to leave.


I won't leave now.
But Kai...
It's for the sake of your bright future.

And burn it into my memory.
After all, I want to bear witness to this blissful sight of you basking in the light...

Ichinoseee


Sensei...
That was the first time I tasted the real thrill of piano concertos!
My soul has been completely liberated...
And melded with the universe.
God has pardoned my sin.
Kai... Ichinose was amazing!
I'm so thrilled I can't calm down!
Can music actually be so grand?
I've never experienced such a thing before.

Up till now...
I was sure that Wei Pang would win no matter how we argue...
Twirl
Twirl
Ichinose
Pang
Theiss
He pulled off a total upset.
He's a dark horse...
Will he be all right?! Our final contestant?!!

Will it really...
Be an upset, after all??!!
Of...

Of course it will be an upset.
But the one who pulls it off won't be Ichinose, but Lech Szymanowski!
Our New Star of Poland will be playing next...

But what's this?!! Why is the hall still buzzing with excitement??!!
Calm down!! Get a hold of yourselves!!
How long is it gonna last??!!
The next contestant is Szymanowski, from Poland!!!

What's the emcee up to?!
Hurry up and come out!! Put o stop to this atmosphere right this instant!!!

That's...

That's not all! What's the deal with the orchestra?!!
Don't make those "Our work is done" faces!!
Your job isn't over yet!!

Or have you forgotten about the most important performance coming up next?!!

I haven't played enough yet!
Haha... Don't worry...
Sorry! I was gonna ask you the exact same thing!
Did you hear how I played just now?!
Ahh... This elation...
Feels great...
The next contestant is Lech Szymanowski... our New Star of Poland!
Are we all prepared?!
You bet!!
We've been itching to play for him!! We can hardly wait!!

Now, Szymanowski!!
You are our future hero!!

Yep, I'm fine!

Lech... Are you all right?

If the piano doesn't...

?

The piano will make a sound, after all!

Yes, sir!
Haha... Then there's something wrong with it.
Tell me right away if that happens!
Lech...?
??
They're the leftovers of Kai's performance, aren't they?
Don't listen to them! That's right! Pay them no mind! That's right!
Haha... All that bustle...
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER
This atmosphere...
WOOOO
WOOOO
CHATTER
CHATTER

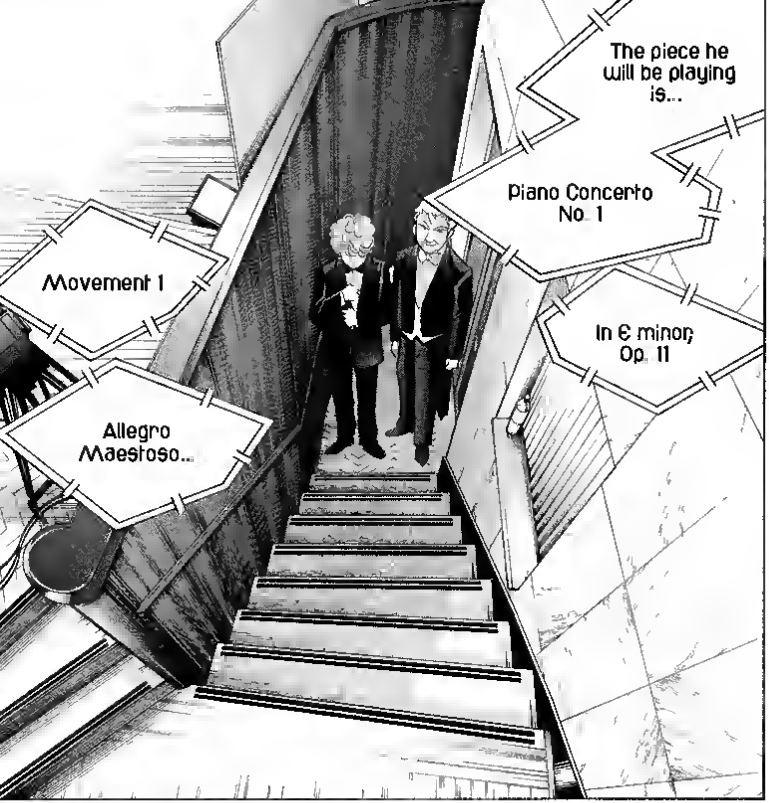
HUMPH
Finally.
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
54

Uh... The next performer is...
Eh?
Ah..

Number 54,
Lech Szymanowski...

Of Poland.
Yes! That's right!!
Cheer for him!!
Have you lot really forgotten about him?

Over half of the audience is Polish.
The support from the locals should be strong.
Then clear the air of Ichinose's annoying presence!!


The piece he will be playing is...
Piano Concerto No. 1
In E minor, Op. 11
Movement 1
Allegro Maestoso...

Movement 2
"Romance" Larghetto...
Amelia...
Amelia...
Amelia...
Amelia...
Pant
Pant

Are you playing for Amelia's sake?
.....
Pa-ar
Pa-ar
Yes!
Then let's play together for her!!
Movement 3
"Rondo" Vivace.

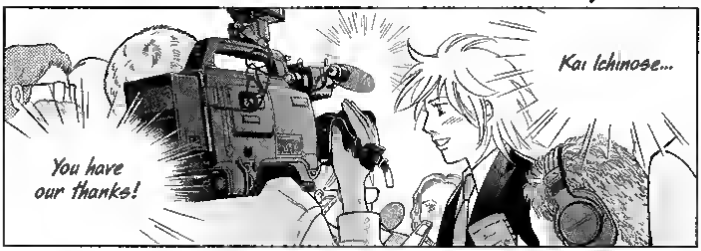
Poor Lech-kun. He has to play right after Ichinose-kun...
Without even an inter-mission...
H-He'll be fine... I think.
He has the locals' support...
His piano of choice is the Steinway
Number 54,
Lech Szymanowski...

Poland.

Cheer for him harder! Harder!!!!
You have to cheer for him to pull off an upset!!

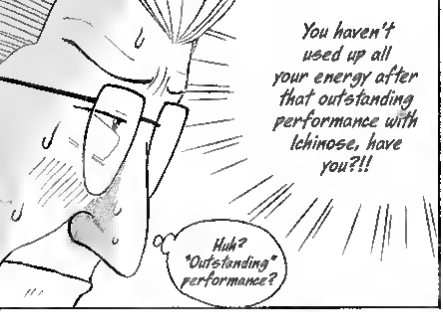
Welcome, Szymanowski.
We will...
Back you up the best we can. We promise!
The performance just now has raised our level.
We have a feeling that we can play our utmost best with you!!

We are grateful...
That we can welcome you...
With this timing... In our current state!

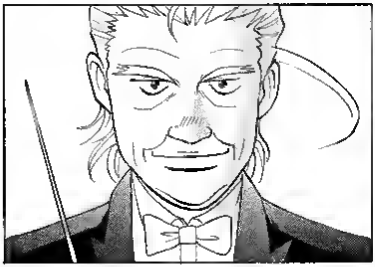

Kai Ichinose...
You have our thanks!

I'm counting on you, Szymanowski.
I feel uneasy about how feeble you seem...
But you're the only one who can win Poland this laurel!

Silence


You haven't used up all your energy after that outstanding performance with Ichinose, have you?!!
Huh? "Outstanding" performance?

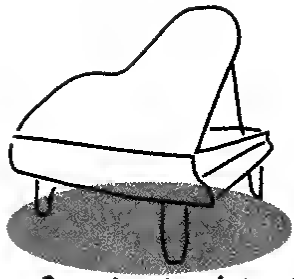
Kord, are you okay?! And how's your orchestra???!!



Everyone's doing fine... I hope?
Of course!!

In that case,
Play as the best archestra...
Let's give them a surprise!!
And support our new star with everything you've got!

Upset END



The Perfect World of KAI

MUSIC ASSISTANCE / SHIMODA KOJI

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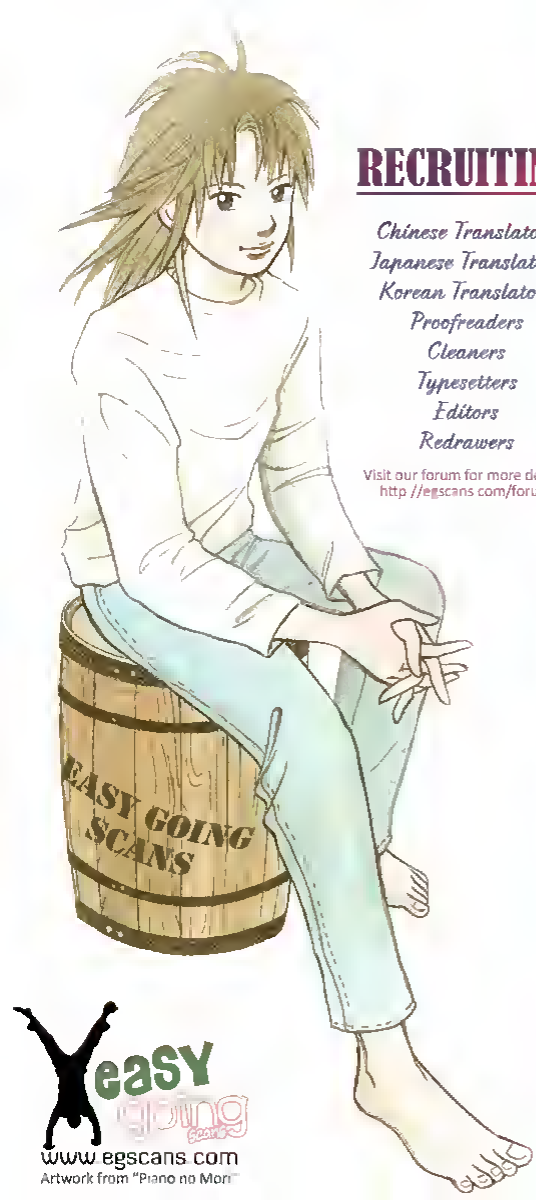
WITH REFERENCES TO "PIANO PRACTICE ROOM" BY KOBAYASHI JIN (SHUNJUSNA PUBLISHING CO.)
"PEOPLE WHO BECOME GOOD AT PLAYING THE PIANO, AND THOSE WHO DON'T"
BY KOBAYASHI JIN (SNUNJUSHA PUBLISHING CO.)
"TO LISTEN TO PLAY — COMMENTARY ON CHOPIN'S WORKS" BY SHIMODA KOJI (CHOPIN)

THE USE OF THE LOGOS OF STEINWAY, YAMAHA, KAWAI, AND PLEYEL HAS BEEN ENDORSED BY THE RESPECTIVE COMPANIES

TO BE CONTINUED IN VOLUME 25



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